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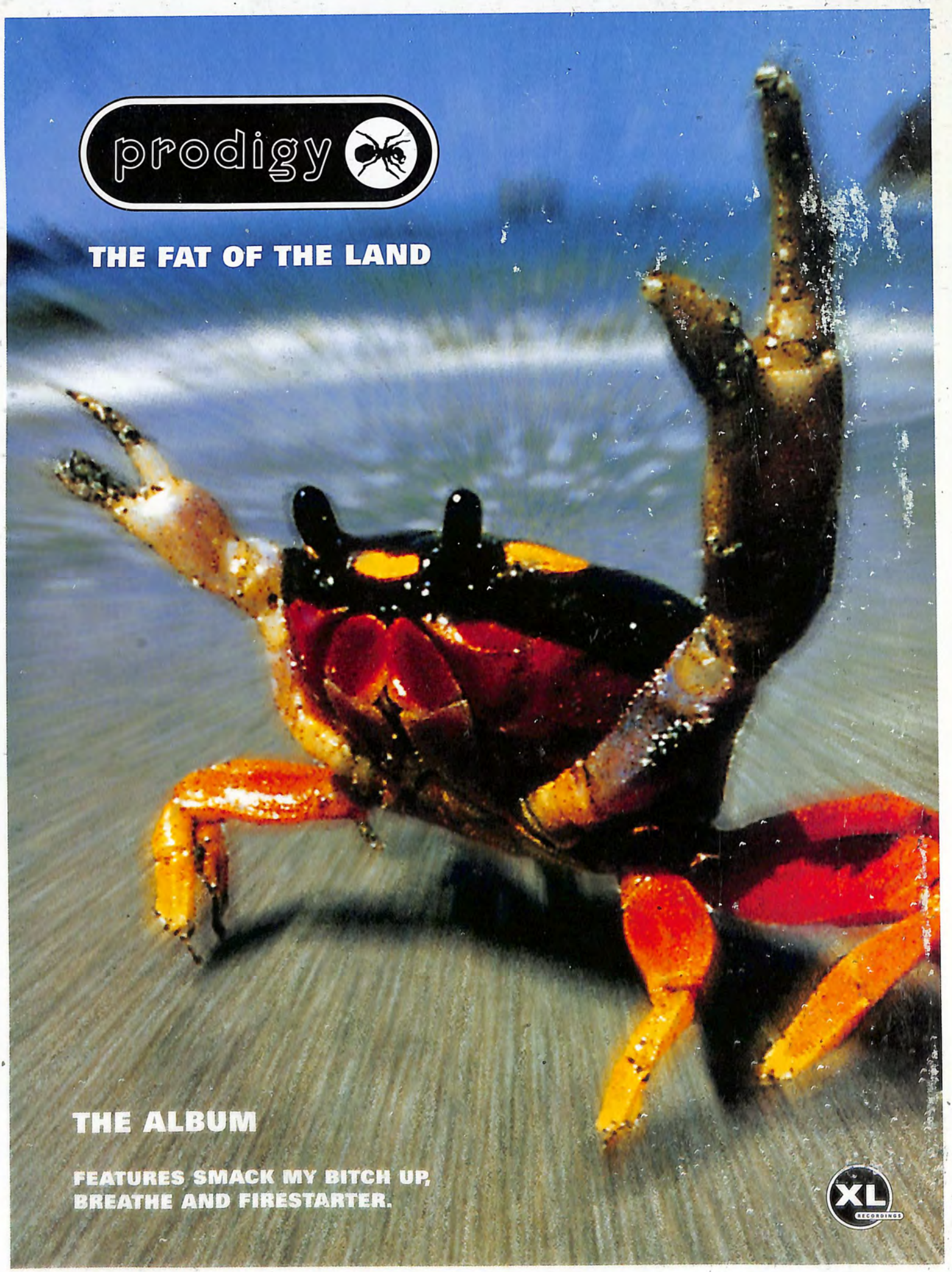
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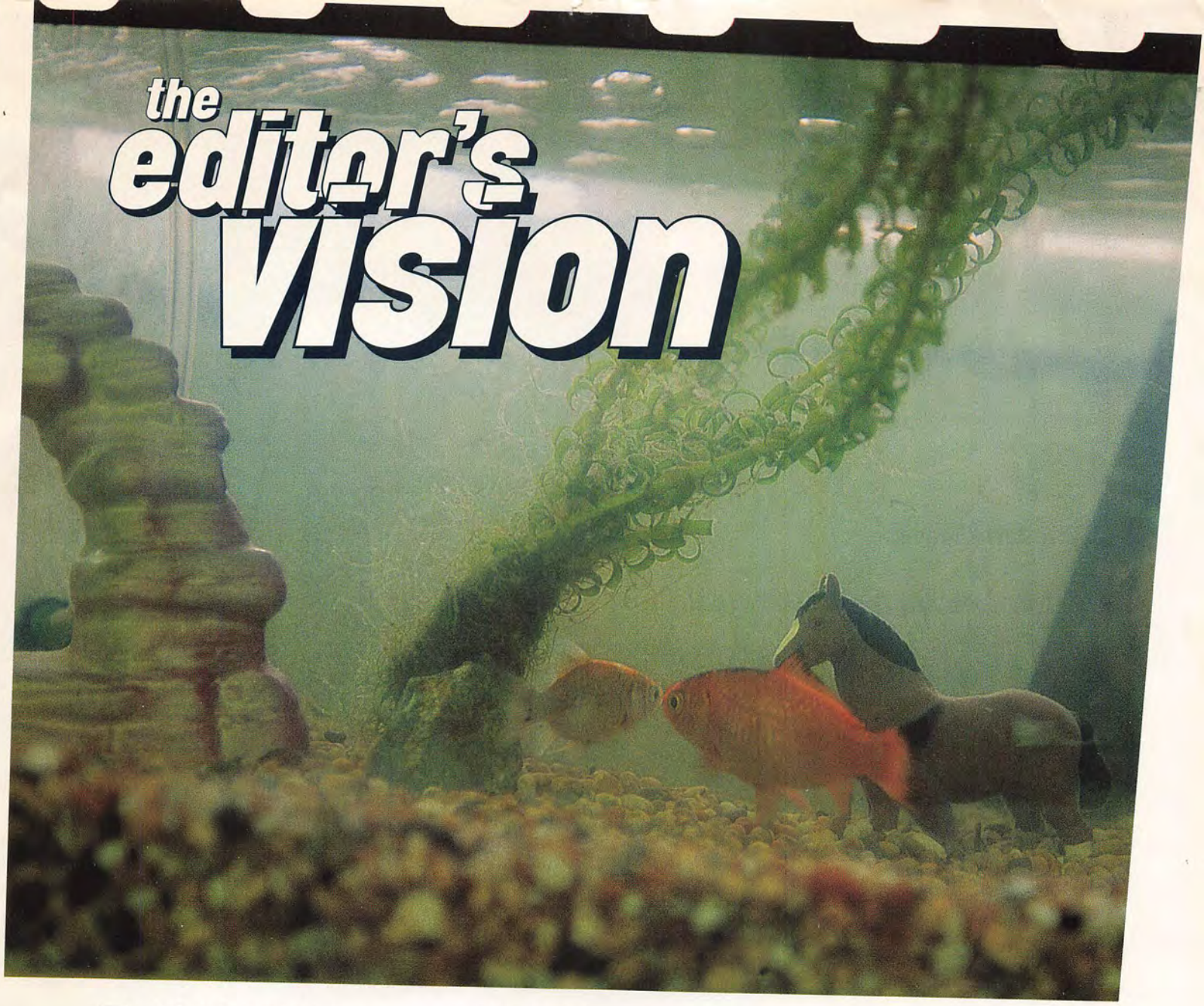

the editor's Vision

And when man opened the last seal, ripped open the bag and looked in wonder at what he found within, blackness descended on the Earth. The fish lay down with the shire horse, which was some sort of omen, but probably not a good one, not for the fish at any rate, and his mind was filled with visions of soap actresses and game show hostesses in their pants, pissed-up sportsmen at the gates of dawn, transvestite comedians, unspeakable blasphemy, sin, pain and cloven-hoofed creatures coming out of the woods. And yea, he was forced to question, "is this worth £2.60?"

"Of course it fuckin' is," spake a heavenly voice.

And it was goodish.

Amen.

Not Much Of A Revelation 18: 34-36

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checking things thoroughly this month...

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meet the staff Michael Holden, award winning journalist with a history of mental health problems, visits France

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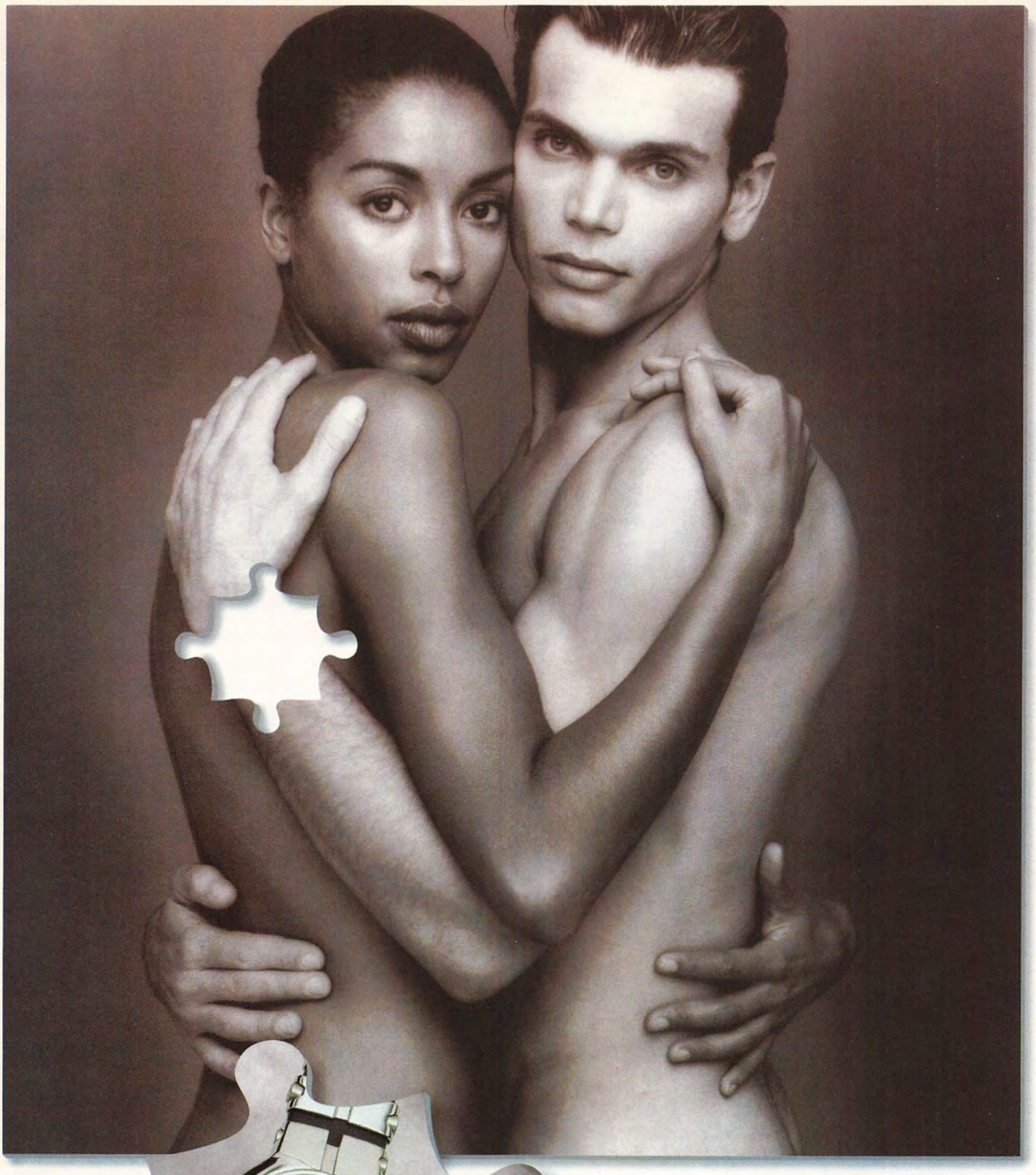

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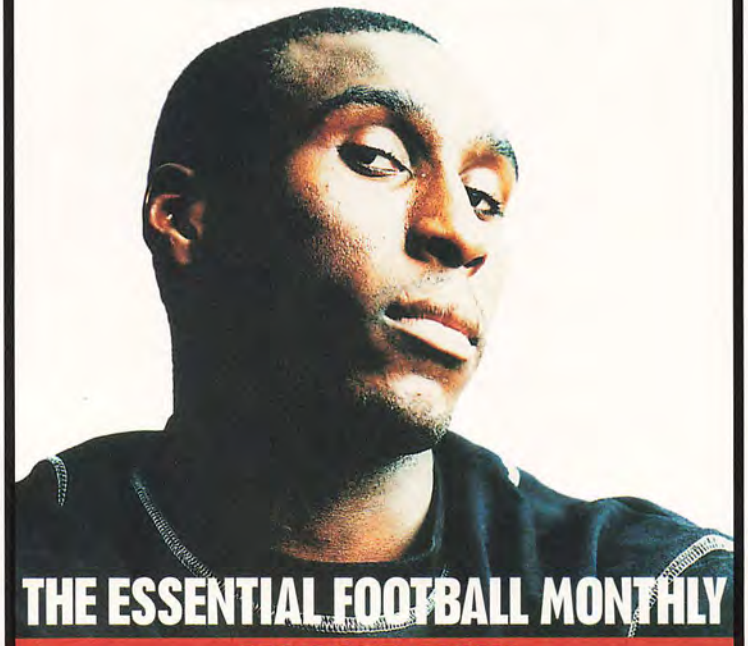

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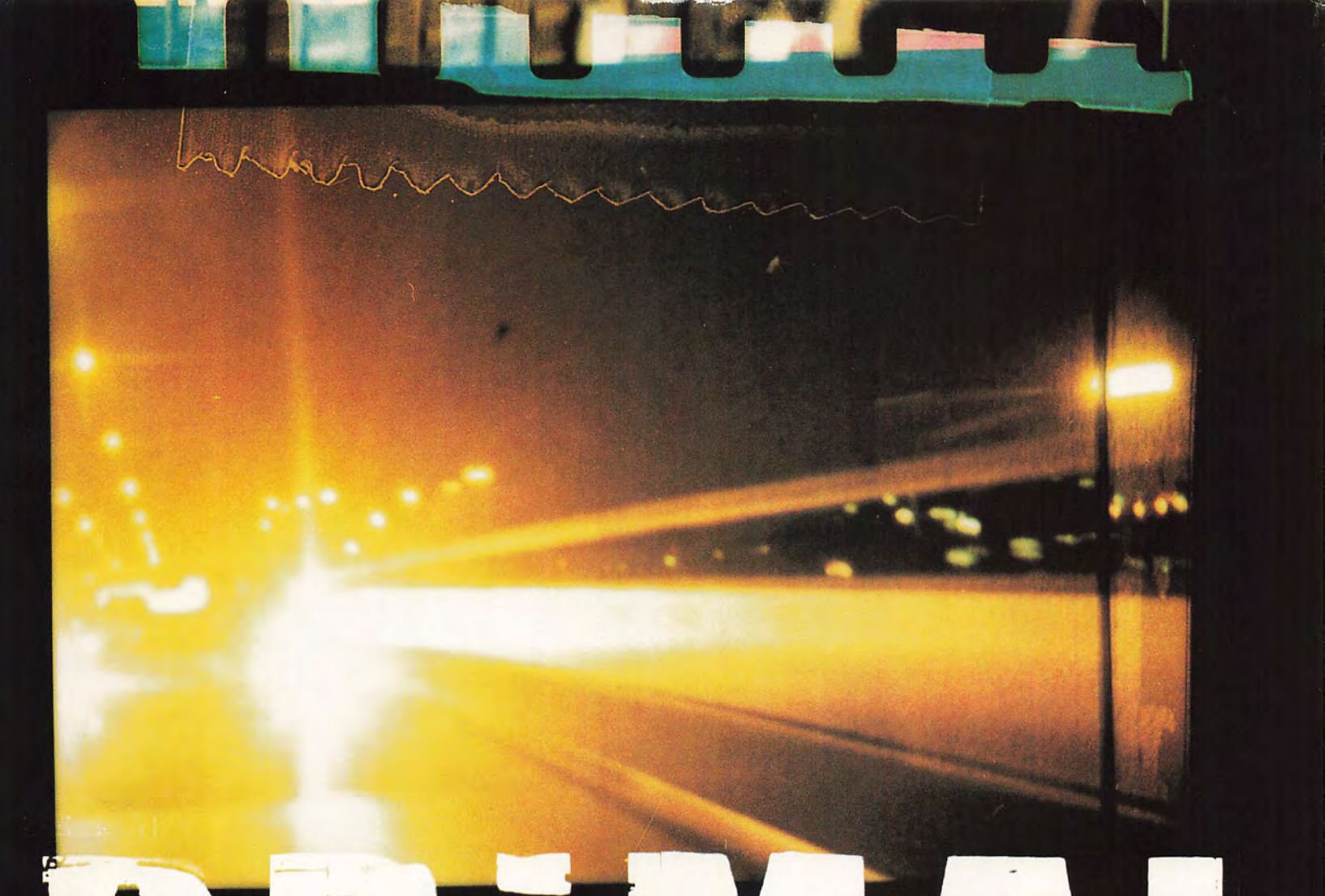

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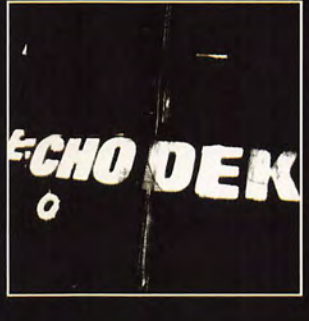

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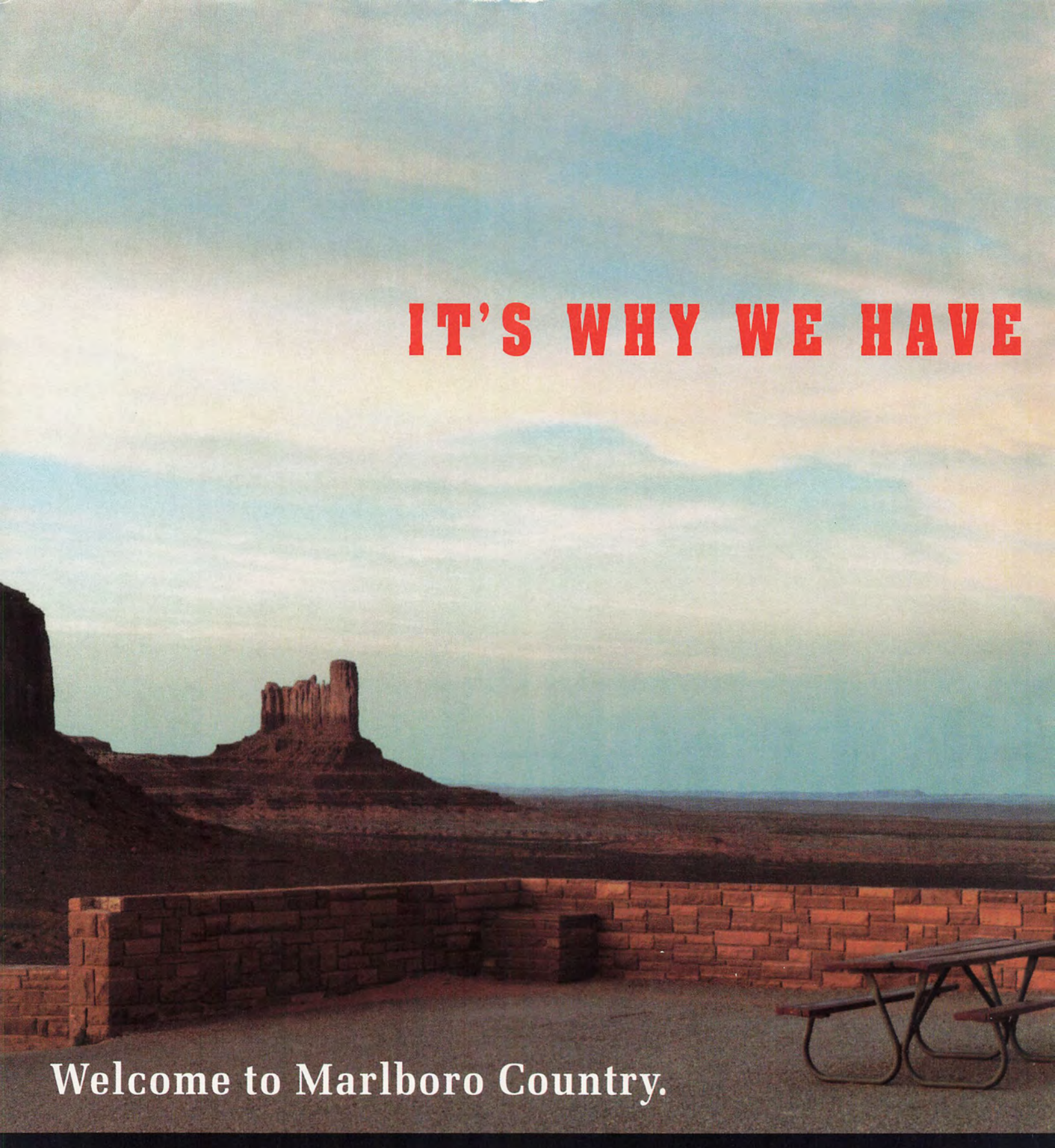

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You'll have to come back later, Santa. I think I've just pulled! This month: USA and France

Lisa Anderson (above) This is exactly what the government warned us about. A woman, a bagful of snails, and too much time on each of these nutters' hands. "So arsing what?" said an onlooker. "I've been watching her fruit for half an hour already and I've got a thought on me that's as hard as Geoff Capes' knackers. I've got knees like the next man, believe me. Look!" Forget it, boyo. Women like Lisa can never be tamed. They will forever laze by our pools until their very minds are filled with fromage frais. Seize the day.

Emmanuelle Beart (right) If Shakespeare had drunk to this thesp bombshell with his eyes, then you can wager he'd never have cast boys to do a woman's job! Star of a handful of fun and exciting films, Emmanuelle still finds time to undertake her favourite hobby – shaving fur from goats' behinds and making moustaches for Austrians. France no longer has Paris as its capital. Beart is their moveable homage to all things French, excluding, of course, onions and spreadable cheeses. Bon.

Nikki Nova (opposite) Isn't it always the same? You ask a woman to feel her own mind in your house and then she turns up outside next door's flat taking the binbags from their kitchen. "You should have been here 10 minutes ago," said the neighbour. "Her underfed dog was lapping at her spilt pineapples like the token beast it is. Then its collar hung from her feet like a tiny icicle. If I wasn't married already, I'd..." Wise words, Conichiwa. 'Freedom' is a single word, unlike 'Free Nelson Mandela' which requires three. That is all.

Send your nominations to World Of Women, loaded, King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS

PHOTOS: BARRY ROSEN; ANDRE RAU/SYGMA; DEREK RIDGES

rogue

platinum rogues

The Premier League of bad behaviour: high rollers and low life

new entry **1**

Hopeless robber (sent in by Andrew, Paris)

Ex-Para Mark Cason could be the worst robber in French history. He was recorded on CCTV nicking £100,000 from a sub-post office after he'd forgotten to put on his mask and gloves. He made matters worse after he asked two kids to open the post office door for him. As he drove away they took down his car licence plate number. Once he arrived at his hotel hide-out, he stashed his haul in the safe and warned the receptionist, "If the police ask for me, I'm not here." He was arrested following a two-day stay in the same hotel, where he drew further attention to himself by running up a £3,000 drinks bill.

new entry **2**

Clive Anderson

Despite having nothing much to gloat about, slap-head toff telly presenter Clive Anderson launched a scathing assault on disco viscounts the Bee Gees. In a genius play on their original name, 'Les Tossers', Anderson told the three that they would "always be tossers" to him. An enraged Barry Gibb climbed out of his chair and boldly told Anderson: "This is a set-up. You're the tosser, pal." With only Maurice left, Anderson asked him if he wanted to go as well. "Well I'd better..." said the remaining jive talker. "I don't do impressions of my brothers."

new entry **3**

Welsh painter

Art conman Ray Beamish was at the centre of Australia's biggest ever art hoax after it was revealed that he'd pretended to be an Aboriginal woman painter in order to flog 50 paintings at a cost of $18,000 each. The pictures had been claimed by the enterprising artist to have been part of a secret tribeswoman's dream ritual. When questioned in court, Beamish surreally insisted that they were merely "inspired by heavy sunstroke".

new entry **4**

Raffled missus

Randy ex-model Thelma Quinton offered herself as a Tombola prize because she wanted to buy her husband a gold watch as an anniversary present. She flogged over 600 $10 tickets, saying she'd spend a night in a motel and do whatever the winner wanted. Taxi driver Edward Blake who won the prize said: "It was the best and most exciting sex I've ever had." Sadly, Thelma's hubby Percival wasn't so grateful. A court in Columbus, Ohio, granted him a divorce on the grounds of adultery. "I don't understand why he was so angry," sobbed Thelma.

new entry **5**

Yoko art defacer

Beatles nemesis Yoko Ono recently attempted a radical new approach to interactive art when she placed a clearly visible sign by some of her works at a Cincinatti museum reading: "No one can tell you not to touch." The offer was seen as an invitation and enthusiastically taken up by by Jake Platt, a local prankster. He swiftly pulled out a red pen and daubed gibberish all over Yoko's pictures, causing some £30,000 worth of damage.

new entry **6**

Weller

The modfather recently spent an uncomfortable night under the lock and key of the Gendarmerie in Paris. Coppers were called to Weller's room after hotel management complained of banging, scraping and shouting. Weller had spent the evening boozing with record company cohorts and was refused room service after he'd run out of minibar drinks. Enraged, the man who penned 'Eton Rifles' did £4,000 worth of damage, before being escorted out of the building by police. Paris is said to be bracing itself for a possible invasion by the Fun Boy Three.

new entry **7**

Stoned sniffer dog (Sent in by Ian Rees, Copenhagen)

Danish sniffer dog Timmie nearly died during a drugs raid after she gorged herself on hash. A couple of hours after consuming the 'solid', the 13-month-old Labrador's pupils dilated as she began to shake and jive around the police station. Although Customs officers gave her a purging emetic, the hash remained firmly in her bloodstream. Timmie was last seen sitting in front of the TV talking about getting off with Gareth Hunt.

new entry **8**

Cow eggs maniac (sent in by Terence Oliver, Australia)

Spurned fiancée Jacqueline Martin finally exacted her revenge halfway through her ex-boyfriend's wedding day. Disguised as a gardener, she crept into the home ceremony during the vows and tipped a bucket of sloppy cow dung over the happy couple. She managed to cover bride Juana Prego's hair as well as her $2,700 dress and the best man's morning suit. It's not yet known if the bride and groom had actually included 'tin bucket of shit' on their wedding list.

new entry **9**

Ben Nevis boozer

Ex-squaddie James Whitelaw got stranded at the peak of Ben Nevis after he'd become too pissed to climb back down. Although his brother managed to raise the alarm, Whitelaw waited eight hours to be rescued. His consumption of a bottle of scotch and five lagers on the climb had resulted in a helicopter rescue, costing the taxpayer £12,000. "I feel a right arsehole and I'm sorry for all the trouble I've caused," he said afterwards. Local police described his actions as "the height of stupidity".

new entry **10**

Buffet brawl

Czech visitors to a Somerset buffet saw red when they noticed the Germans in the next room were being served better food than them. Stealing into the room to whisk away the Hun's nibbles, the thieving Czechs were met with an instantaneous Panzer-style blitzkrieg of chicken drumsticks and vol au vents. A trans-European rumble ensued, with one German lady being hospitalised by a flying plate. Police still believe one guest to be at large, and recommend that he be approached with caution as he may be in possession of a large poached Salmon.

new entry **11**

Flying pigs

Noted for having the same effect on animals as LSD does on humans, green acorns have been making pigs trip in Glasgow Zoo. When pot-bellied pig Poppy became sluggish and disorientated, his keepers were baffled until they discovered he'd been furiously popping the suspect green acorns. "He seemed to be having a good time, but was totally oblivious to us," said a zoo spokesman before disappearing behind a strobe light.

new entry **12**

Fighting pensioners

Lifeguards in Norfolk had to intervene when two pensioners began lamping each other during an early morning swimming session.The argument started over which one should give way to the other while the pair were swimming the same lengths. Both men were ejected from the swimming baths after the fight moved out onto the poolside. One man received a split lip while the other was bitten, receiving a cut finger. Both men are also expected to have picked up verucas during the course of the scuffle.

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new entry 13

Toilet crawler

A kerb-crawling driver was less than convincing when he drew up at public lavatories that were under surveillance by the police for indecent activity. He told officers he was stopping for a rest, but on closer inspection they found he was wearing high-heeled shoes, fishnet stockings and a miniskirt. The man was detained in custody after he told the officers that dinner was out of the question.

new entry 14

Jim Davidson

"I don't need this," said Jim 'Nick Nick' Davidson as he flounced off stage following an argument with a heckler. The *Big Break* star was tormented to such a degree that he turned to the crowd and asked if they actually wanted him to fuck off. When a few of the more disloyal punters shouted "YES!" the Cockney maestro promptly upped sticks and left.

!!

new entry 15

Phone box woman (sent in by Kevin Gookall, Willenhall)

Explaining why she smashed a pane of glass in a Walsall phone box and then dialled 999, Angela Withnall told police that she was convinced it was the devil. She explained that she'd been hallucinating at the time and had mistaken the seven-foot steel structure for Satan. Withnall was given a conditional discharge for six months and made to pay £40 costs. Quite why she beat up Satan and then tried to tickle his belly by dialling 999 is still unclear.

new entry 16

Wedding cake (sent in by Eric Campbell, Edinburgh)

Furious Germans Franz and Greta Rousch of Bonn are suing the minister who married them. The hungry cleric got into deep water after guests arriving at the reception discovered that he'd eaten the entire four-tier wedding cake.

new entry 17

Gnome Liberation Front

Four members of the Gnome Liberation Front recently appeared in a French court to answer more than 150 charges of seizing garden gnomes. GLF attack squads had left calling cards announcing: "Your gnomes have now been liberated so they can live in peace in the forest." The prosecution argued that people should have the right to keep gnomes even if others considered it to be in bad taste. "Next time somebody tries to steal my gnomes, I won't bother going to the police. I'll be ready with my shotgun," said a victim.

new entry 18

The in-laws (sent in by Keith Gray, Dubai)

A young Egyptian man keeled over from shock on his honeymoon when he lifted the ceremonial veil of his beautiful new bride. It turned out that his sneaky in-laws had pulled the old switcheroo and left the young groom with a 40-year-old cleaner in the place of his gorgeous young fiancée. After two weeks of married life the man said that he had ceased to notice the difference.

COMPILED BY PHIL ROBINSON AND NIALL HAMPTON

Cheeky's Way

There is no stopping the Way Of The Cheeky. Yes our very own TV show-sort-of starring the legendary puppet chimp is now showing on all the BT Touchpoint kiosks, unfortunately only across London. Just touch the screen and the monkey will come to life. Walk and talk in his rufty tufty type way. Meet his crazy friends, Taxi Rat Bum, Foilface and the Magic Banana, and marvel at the incredible state-of-the-art special effects. Yes, truly the monkey will dance for you. This month he meets his new friend Rock Foxy and contemplates his future in a PVC vest and a big moustache whilst listening to Hi-NRG. Also on these BT Touchpoint things we have the legendary Scottish comedian Kevin Davies doing the incredible **loaded** World Of Quiz. There is also some other stuff insidiously trying to make you buy the latest issue. It will be outside London soon.

BARNET UPDATE

With the visit of Division Two pace-setters Watford on 15 November, FA Cup fever arrived at Underhill. Unfortunately, it also left 90 minutes later thanks to two scrappy goals from Ronny Rosenthal which cancelled out buoyant Barnet's early supremacy and first-half lead through Ken Charlery's superlative strike. The **loaded** lot were in full effect amongst the biggest crowd of the season so far, taking our positions on the East Terrace. We came, we saw and we moaned about Graham Taylor's lack of strategy whilst enjoying the full range of Underhill's hot drinks and pies. Liked the half-time penalty shoot-out too. Next up for the intrepid Bees to swarm over, it's home to Macclesfield Town (13 December), away to Scarborough (19 December), home to Peterborough United (Boxing Day), away to Swansea City (28 December) and Exeter City (3 January) and home to Rotherham United (10 January). Come on Barnet! Drop everything – we did – and catch them at Underhill, Barnet Lane, Barnet, Hertfordshire, EN5 2BE. It's all Category A for only £7 (standing) or £12 (seated).

Reader shirt offer

We're still offering every reader the chance to get hold of this season's best football shirt. Forget the garishly coloured, badly designed competition and get this – it comes complete with a swanky **loaded** logo on the front to let everyone know exactly where your allegiances lie. One size fits all and it's XL in this case.

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come and have a go if you think you're hard enough

Why the hitman missed

Having just read *The Hitman And Her* great moment in life in December's **loaded**, I feel compelled ('cos I ain't got a right lot to do at the moment) to inform you of a few inaccuracies. Firstly, the 'night-spot' in Bradford was then called Caesar's Palace and not Rotters (where the fuck that place is I don't know).

And another thing while I'm at it, I think the reason you never saw anyone pissed, stoned or shagging was because the programme was actually filmed between 7pm and 10pm and the only people there were probably students, under-age drinkers or sad bastards who didn't care if they woke up with their Auntie Maria. I'm also informed that whilst the filming was going on the bars were closed and only opened for a half hour in-between. If only they had filmed it at Bibbys (AKA The Capricorn Club) just around the corner, it would have been a damn sight more interesting to say the least. Now *there* was a club in Bradford which the rave culture had not completely bypassed.
DJ, e-mail

Rolf Harrisment

"A man difficult not to love," you say in the December issue when describing Rolf Harris! What kind of perverts are you?

"I'm Jake the Peg with the extra leg," he boasts smugly. "Two little boys had two little toys," he sings suggestively. And as for "Tie me kangaroo down sport..." That's just plain disgusting. I shudder to think what sport our Rolf does with his digeridoo once he's got the kangaroo well and truly lashed down. And recently he's been into sick animals that can't run away.

Does this man's deviancy know no bounds?
Ali, Camden

100 per cent fucking idiot

Will you give me a job? I am good at writing as long as no one marks my spelling or grammar. And, I can build good bombs. I thought

The Pomeleros Sector
If you dont like gross stuff then go away and dont look at it because everything here is gross
This is me, Reggie Pomeleros, I am 50% Italian and 50% Greek, if there are any ladies out there then you might know that I add up to 100% Fuck Master!!!

that you cunts should all come and stay at my house in Canada because me and my friends can do cool shit. In summer we smash beer bottles on our heads and in winter when there is snow on the streets, we get driving and jump out of the car doors, the record is 50kph. No one has gone to the hospital except for smashing bottles on our heads. I have received three stitches in my finger, my friend cut behind his ear and got 12 stitches and another friend got two staples when I smashed him in the head with some of those ninja nunchuks or whatever.
Dave Chatburn, Canada
PS: Put my website in your mag. I pretend that I am Reggie Pomeleros.

Louise's fan writes...

You have really pissed me off with your so called review of Louise's new album *Woman In Me*. I mean what the fuck does 'Really Awful' mean? You could have at least said why you did not like it. Even so you are talking total bollocks. It is an excellent album. Much better than the crap you have said is good, brilliant etc.

Fuck off
Peter, e-mail

Bird fanciers

I am still laughing after reading a 'serious' article from the BBC *Wildlife* magazine. I quote: "The Farne Islands, Northumbrian coast. An ornithologist's fantasy island. More than 19 species of seabirds, including puffins, guillemots and terns, breed here in their thousands. One of the few places you can get so close to a shag that you can smell it."
B Ive, Southend-on-Sea

Where's the roachstag?

Caution! Spliff rolling ahead. As found somewhere in Germany, I can't quite remember where.
Dave Poe, The Wirral

Scotch wrath

I've got to say that I love your mag, but for fuck's sake, when are you going to get your identity correct. One minute you're shouting "Rule Britannia", the next you're spouting how great English sport is and how great Englishmen are. About that section in the mag, I can name many Scots that have done a lot more to help the world than any Englishman. So sort it out. Are you British or are you fucking English?
The Psychotic Mad Scotsman, East Glasgow

Second stoopidest letter ever

Your magazine be full o'totty. And it is being good (very). Anyway, this half term I have been on a Third Reich Hitlery type school trip round Europe. It is quite good, but it is not in the mood of liking me teachers. First – they are evil. Second – they confiscate stuff (lighters). Please put this in bunch of arse and have a good life.
Dense Boy, Nuremberg

Kelly's a hero

Kelly Brook. So gorgeous I could cry. Please have her model anything in future issues.
Lucas James Cabal, West Yorkshire

Shark fanciers

I was incensed by your Bunch Of Arse article on shark attacks and Vic Hislop. Let's face it, your man did no research and Vic is bonkers.

Great White and Tiger sharks aren't nearly as bad as they're painted. Fact: they kill only a handful of people, worldwide, per year. Fact: sharks rarely eat people alive and less than a quarter of attacks indicate any desire to nibble the victim – they spit us out! Most of the deaths result from shock, blood loss, drowning, infections, and crap first aid – stuff that can be sorted. The famous image of the rogue-killer-shark-

pornalikes

Enjoy the enclosed pic of Damon Albarn, who on this evidence is one of those boys who like girls!
Darren Parish, Andrew Ferrie, Paul Francis, Helston Dunc, Alan, Jim and Roy, Chelmsford

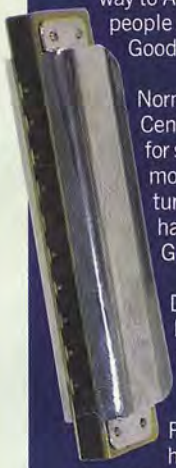
Richard and Judy: if this isn't the best and funniest celebrity Porn-alike you have ever,ever seen, I'll drink a pint of William Hague's jizz!!!
Doug Staisy, Birmingham

Enid Blyton would turn in her grave to see this picture of Noddy and friend. Shame that the term 'big ears' may be a little less apt than big...
Steve and Matt, e-mail

Good Work Fella!

Big mates of **loaded** this month:

British Airways, for sticking the features ed in Club Class on the way to America, so that fewer people had to look at him. Good Work Airline!



Norman's Harmonica Centre (01493 728654) for sending us a load of mouth organs and turning the office into harmonica bedlam Good Work Blues Fella.

Danish people. Funny and modern. Good Wørk Fellas!

Psychic Niall, for having the ability to predict which soccer star stickers are contained inside packets of Wotsits. And then using the said ability to win money! Good Work Fella!

Bunch Of Arse

Sandwich shops that attempt to poison you with an overdose of Marmite because you've been polite enough to highlight that their stupid staff are unaware of the fact that Branston Pickle and chutney are to all intents and purposes one and the same. Bunch Of Arse.

Idle traders and publicans exploiting the fact that at the end of the millennium, after centuries of refinement, the British character is such that you can foist badly poured pints of Guinness that taste of cider on people and they'll thank you for it. This is the same reason the Byzantine civilization fell apart! Bunch Of Spineless Consumer Arse!

Little dogs who seem chirpy in the pub but are in fact tragically dying of cancer. Bunch Of Small Dogs In Heaven Arse!

Twisted bastards who come up to you in the pub and tell you that the little dog eating crisps out of your hand has got cancer. Especially when they aren't going to "die next week" and they happen to be really lively. Bunch Of Lying Arse.

Whoever keeps sending us plain brown boxes filled with tasty unlabelled sandwiches. How can we tell they're not filled with invisible poison if you don't own up to making them! Bunch Of Hungry Arse!

out-to-get-you is pure fantasy.

Vic believes pre-historic 80ft Megalodon Sharks still exist! I rest my case.

One final statistic: men are 13.5 times more likely to be attacked, and there is no explanation!

Alix, Huddersfield

Pest test

As an avid reader of your magazine, I feel compelled to ask you the meanings of these phrases:

1) Snak, Snak
2) Yak,Yak
3) Rak, Rak
4) Knak, Knak, as featured in your Office Pest cartoon (October '97).

Am I a complete freak with no general knowledge, or do Jon and Mick (the authors) talk complete shite?

Simon Arnold, Birmingham

PS: It could just be that I have no sense of humour.

El Doctor in Cuba

Dr Mick is a legend! We recently had the great honour of stumbling across him in Cuba (no mention of him, however, in November's excellent article for some reason). While the great doctor soaked up a bottle of Havana Club and laid (into) our women (Cathy and Scotty), my mate Spam and I stormed the dancefloor to "Viva la Biva!"

After a quality evening we shared a flight home, resulting in more excess rum consumption, a knackered air hostess (good work doctor!), and finally a police escort from the plane! Dr Mick – you are beautiful!

Chuck T, Battersea, London

D.I.High

My dad's been acting funny for about a week now, nipping in and out of the shed in the back garden. Sunday afternoon, he fell asleep. I nabbed the key out of his pocket and slowly made my way to the shed. The door creaked open, and there it was!!! (What a sly fox!)

Scott Brayley, Merseyside

Third stoopidest letter ever

Since the tremendous success of my new pop record, I have decided to leave my long-term soul mate Ken, and go in search of a real action man. I don't know if Ken misses me or not, but perhaps these photos of me in my latest PVC gear will wake him up to what he's going to be missing! I also feel it is time for me to change my image to something more 'spicy'.

I wonder if there are any of your readers (male or female) who would be prepared to take me (anywhere). I love life in plastic (it's fantastic). You can take off all my clothes. You can bend me, or make me kneel (see cup).

Must be well endowed, ie: Land Rover, fitted kitchen etc. Please send SAE and waist down photo in the buff.

Barbie Bondage, Bournemouth

What Mark? E

Mark E Smith (**loaded** Dec '97) eat my shite. Culloden wasn't the last battle on English soil. I know 'cos I live in Culloden most of the time and, unless I've mistaken my sphincter for a necklace for the last 20 years, it is very much in Scotland, six miles from Inverness, probably.

Awol MacDonald, Scotland

Danish obscenity

If Robson and Jerome ever wanted to crack Denmark I think they'd have to change their name to 'TwatPissArse' if these Danish 'Grannies' favourites' are anything to go by.

Paul Fraser, London

Top tips

Here's a rather strange pair of things I came across in the Bruneian jungle. At first we thought we'd discovered a fossilised prehistoric man killed in his moment of glory, but we're now of the belief that they're roots of some description.

Perhaps someone out there knows the true identity.

Cpl R Arnold, Brunei

Sky man brought down

Do **loaded** readers agree with me that Andy Gray has taken over from Jimmy Hill as No1 wanker on TV football? I endured the witterings of this appalling twat before, during and after the recent Italy v England game, where he must even have embarrassed English people. He claims to be a Scot, but appeared to be willing England to do well. This is just not what Scotsmen do.

David McCulloch, Port Glasgow

Tied Marks

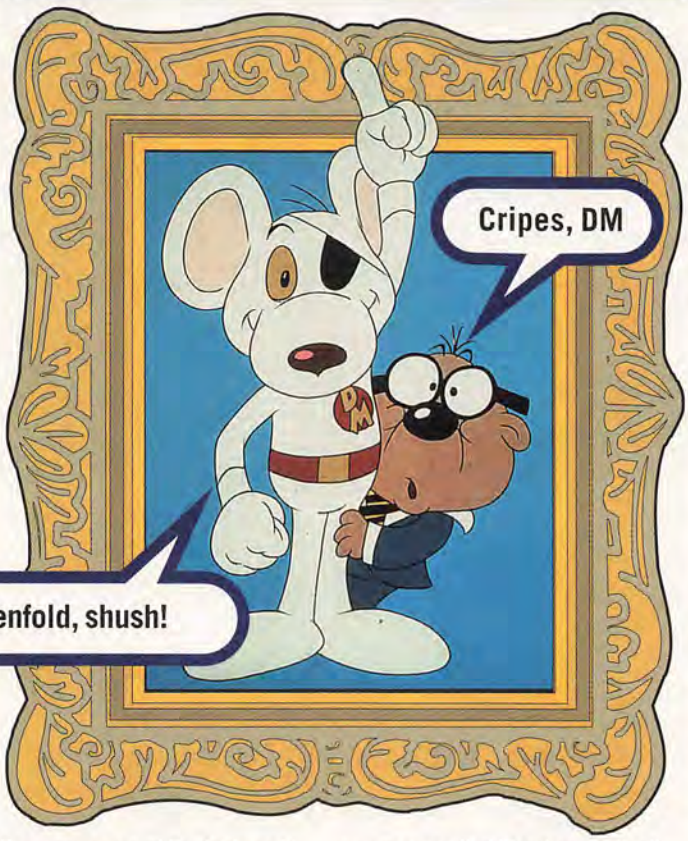
I know a bloke who once nicked Howard Marks. Good Work Fella !

Simon Chavasse, Leeds

All intelligent, witty and urbane letters are welcome at **loaded**, *King's Reach Tower, Stamford St, London, SE1 9LS or e-mail us at loadweb@ipc.co.uk*

Greatest Living Englishman

No.42 Dangermouse



"He's the greatest! He's fantastic! Wherever there is danger, he'll be there! He's the ace! He's *amazing*! He's the strongest, he's the quickest, he's the berrrrssstt! Dangermouse! *Danger-mouse*! DANGER-MOUUUSE!"

The theme song, sung by shrieking overwrought women as the world's most dynamic cartoon mouse hurdled exploding bombs, really didn't do the 'White Wonder' justice, not by a long chalk horse. *Dangermouse* (or DM, as he was known to his closest friends, and, consequently, me) was the coolest thing on television in the '80's, tiny scrabbling paws down. And yes, I am taking *Tucker's Luck* into consideration.

Sandwiched saucily on Children's ITV between *Murphy's Mob* and *Razzamatazz*, Dangermouse stood out like a big-eared rodent in a cage full of idiot elephants simply because it was utterly, stupidly chaotic. It seemed to have been written by the proverbial monkeys chained to typewriters who had given up on Shakespeare and just started to muck about. Plot lines were ignored, loose ends left dangling like wedding tackle in the breeze and characters completely wiped from the storyboard with a damp cloth, in the name of a few cheap gags. *Dangermouse* was simply the *Tiswas* of animation.

OK, there *was* a very loose framework for the programme, beginning with a psychedelic, *Yellow Submarine*-style shot of the London skyline, while, over the top, an announcer intoned, "London, home of the beefeater and the costermonger, home to the pearly kings... and home to the world's greatest secret agent, Dangermouse, and his roundly incompetent sidekick, Penfold."

Cut to an ariel shot of a red pillarbox in Baker Street where inside, relaxing in their groovy bachelor pad, DM and Penfold would receive the latest mission from their bumbling walrus boss Colonel K. Invariably this would involve a dastardly plan by Baron Silas Greenback (DM's arch-enemy, a fat Blofeld-like toad) to take over the world by creating giant chickens, turning elephants into sugar cubes, starting a plague of Egyptian pyramids that threatens to sink London; all the obvious stuff.

Dangermouse and Penfold would then leap into their flying yellow car ("This calls for some *fancy* driving") and zoom from under a handily hinged kerbstone to save the earth by telling a few very poor jokes.

Cosgrove Hall, the sinister animation company behind the series, must have got bored very quickly, because only a few dozen episodes in, the formula was being fucked with to such an extent that, in one episode, the whole first half of the cartoon was taken up with the narrator standing on his head, swallowing his pet goldfish ('Geraldine') and getting small change stuck up his nose. These people were mental. No wonder we all turned out so weird.

Even stranger is the fact that Dangermouse was a big hit across the pond. If ever there was a series that was unapologetically British, it was *Dangermouse*, from the pathetic Music Hall humour (Look out, the witch doctor!", "Which doctor?" "The witch doctor. He's been away for a spell...", etc) to the Anglocentric adventures themselves (Baron Greenback tries to destroy the world with bagpipe music, a flood of lumpy school custard, faulty washing machines and a monster called 'Frankenstoat', all in one episode).

And most British of all was Dangermouse himself. Dressed in a nifty white suit, a patch over one eye, he was Sherlock Holmes, Jason King and James Bond rolled into one very 2D ball. Suave, sophisticated and unflappable, even when strapped down and having his ears stretched to twice their size, his catchphrase "Good Grrrief!" injected a healthy dose of swinging '60's pencil-moustachioed Leslie Phillips-isms into the proceedings.

The whole point of *Dangermouse* was to be rampantly silly. It was the *Tiswas* of animation

And then there were all the other characters: the lisping Peter Lorre vole , Professor Squawkencluck, Greenback's deeply evil pet caterpillar Nero, who only spoke in farts; Stilletto, the baron's right-hand Italian crow ("Si, Barone"); and, of course, DM's loyal friend and squeaky-voiced Watson, Penfold. There have, of course, been a number of twisted perverts who have suggested that the power behind the Dangermouse throne actually lay with Penfold who, like Columbo and Clouseau before him, hid a great detective mind within the bumbling speccy hamster exterior. There really is no room for this sort of talk, and if you keep it up, I'll have to summon a policeman. Did Penfold face the giant arachnid menace in 'Aaargh! Spiders!'? Did the chubby-cheeked one foil the evil rubber raft plot in 'Alping Is Snow Easy Matter?' No. I rest my case.

Basically, the whole point of *Dangermouse* was just to be rampantly silly. Thus Colonel K is described as "One time desert rat, first to climb Everest on a pogo stick, cerise belt with little gold applique butterflies all over it in judo, piano-thrower extraordinaire." Bonkers. The best lines, however, came from the highly-strung narrator (voiced, along with DM, Colonel K, Nero and later, the spin-off Count Duckula, by the deeply underrated David Jason), who'd almost always end the show with words to the effect of: "Will Dangermouse be eaten by the mechanical cat? Will Penfold be shrunk by Greenback's fiendish ray? Will Colonel K escape from the treacle machine? Will this rubbish go on *forever*? Can I stand another week of this? Won't someone help MEEE?!!" In one episode the narrator (whose name it later transpired was Isambard) continually interrupts the action to appeal for the return of "a handknitted Balaclava for a medium sized budgerigar", explaining that "the heating's packed up and I don't want Esmerelda getting frostbite on her beak".

Best episode? That'd have to be the suspiciously named 'Ee! Tea', where Greenback brings London to a standstill when he steals the world's tea ("No tea breaks, no workers: country grinds to a halt"), sucking it into the spout of a giant teapot-shaped spaceship orbiting the moon. Eventually Dangermouse is engulfed in "an enormous tidal wave of char!"

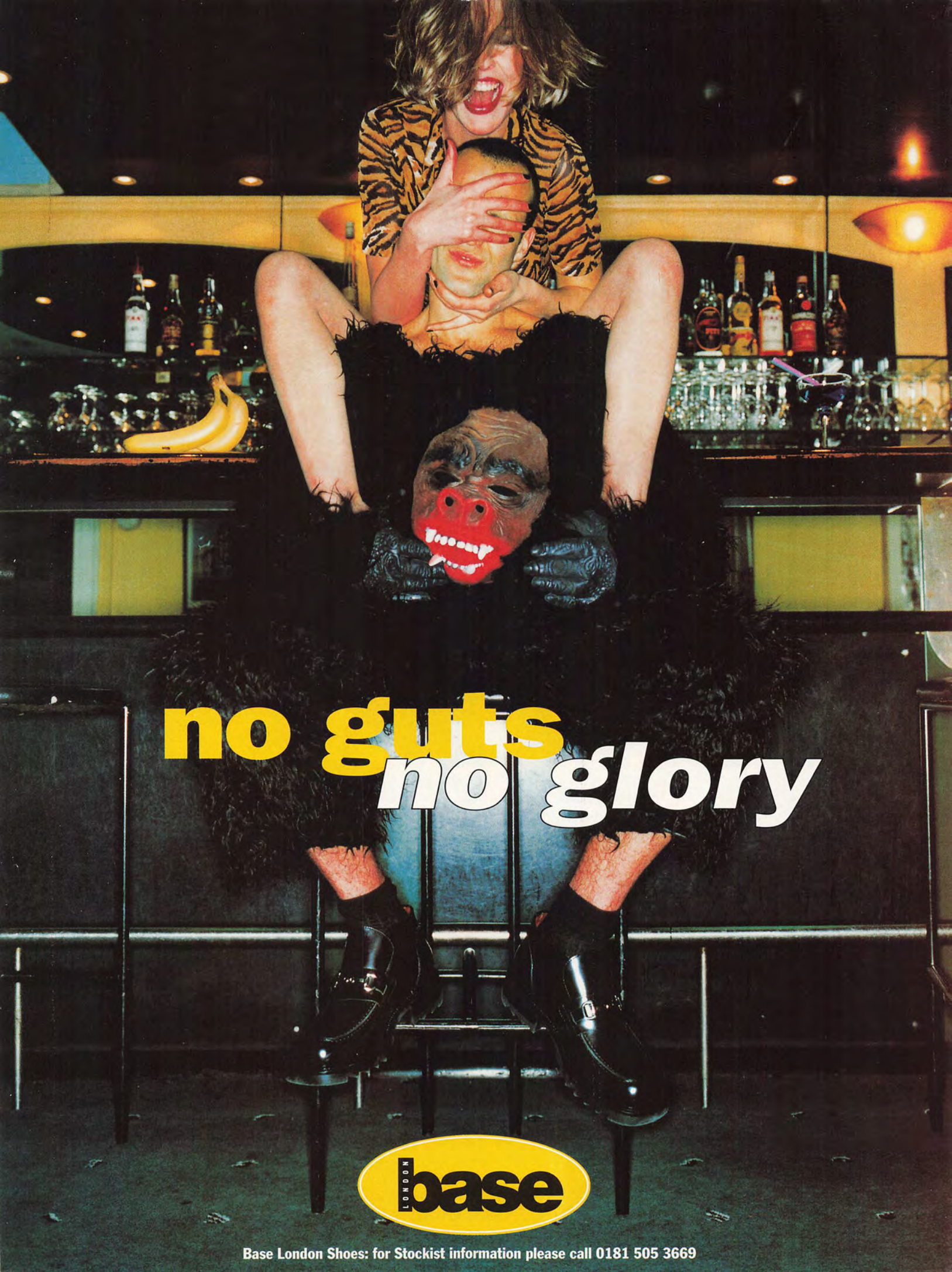
"How did you escape?" asks Colonel K, wearily.

"I took off the lid of the teapot spaceship, popped Penfold on the top, frisbeed it towards Mayfair and then hopped on board myself", replies Danger Mouse nonchalantly.

"Umm... I'm not sure that makes any sense, DM..."

Dangermouse turns to camera, winks with his one good eye and smirks, "It IS only a cartoon, sir..."

JOHN PERRY



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GREAT MOMENT IN LIFE

PHOTO: BBC

Fight, Fight, Fight!

Having a crack at the hardest bloke in school

Out of all the blokes in my school, I was about the 400th hardest. I'm not putting myself down or anything, but in the nutcase stakes I was about level with the amicable giant who sketched during breaks and smelled of Dairylea. I believed my first bird we she told me that I was a lover not a fighter, and my plan was to slide through to my final exams doing everything possible to avoid the random punishment beatings, humiliations and smack abuse that I'd seen on *Grange Hill*.

My plan was working out, right up to the point that I started hanging about with kids with green teeth. I hadn't given it much thought, but I was suddenly spending more time tying swings up than I was watching the telly. Matters escalated to ludicrous proportions when I was actually kidnapped and had to flush a bloke's trainers down a toilet to escape and made my first proper enemy – a bloke called Neil. I'd never really had an enemy before, but all of a sudden I'm sneaking around school watching my back. Not just on the look out for him, but 14 of his violent mates who, rumour had it, wanted to hang me out of the Home Economics block windows by my ankles. I knew they were serious, because four weeks previous I'd actually been there when Spencer – who was built like John Paul Sigmarson off *World's Strongest Man* – hung a little gimp from four floors up. I knew I was in for it. Making matters worse, it was about this time that my brother started seeing Neil's best mate's girlfriend. Neil's best mate Darrel was more randomly violent than Son of Sam. It was only going to be a matter of time before it all got out. My idiot brother may as well have gone and bought a large bat and crowned me with it himself. Darrel got his bird to admit to having had knowledge of my brother (they'd met during rehearsals for the school play, *Half A Sixpence*) and came looking for us. Incredibly, my brother went to ground like Carlos the Jackal and hid for two weeks. I was left to sort the mess out.

Later that week I was minding my own business, turning Pritt Stick into bogies at the back of RE, when someone told me there was going to be a fight after school. "Who's fighting?" I said. "Darrel," said the bloke in front. "Darrel and who?" I enquired curiously. In front a ginger bloke with his collar turned up like Simon Le Bon turned round and snarled at me, "You, you idiot."

Do what? Morning bell went and the whole school was buzzing about me fighting with Darrel. He'd become a minor celebrity with the free dinners kids because he always had a new pair of Farahs on and a moody Gucci watch from Romford market. The whole thing was generating too much noisy interest. Later that morning the man himself bowled up and officially challenged me to a fight. I couldn't say no, and it was set for later that day. The second he walked away I could feel the pressure bear down on me. In an instant I was the centre of attention for the whole school. People I didn't even know were coming up to me, telling me I was going to get pasted and asking me why I was fighting. I felt like shit. In no time I had a head full of *999* stories of past fights.

"Remember the time Scott smashed Daniel in the head with a hammer? And Daniel went blind, but he still slashed Scott's leg off with a machete. But Scott can't see any more because he got nose cancer and died in prison." Or: "Tommy Skates had a fight with Ricky Mather and swallowed his teeth in the ambulance." There was no way I was going to even land a punch on Darrel, whose fighting prowess was now being spoken of in the same hushed whispers as Mr Han from *Enter The Dragon*.

I was the freak boy, the condemned man. Everyone wanted a look at my face before I got it rearranged

This whole fight had become some weird formality. By the time we actually got round to it I was petrified. I wanted to go home but I knew that the whole school was waiting for me to die, and I couldn't do so much as have a piss without altering the odds on the fight. For the first time in my life I was a marked man. I went to the toilet in the afternoon break and puked pineapple juice baby dribble all over my shoes.

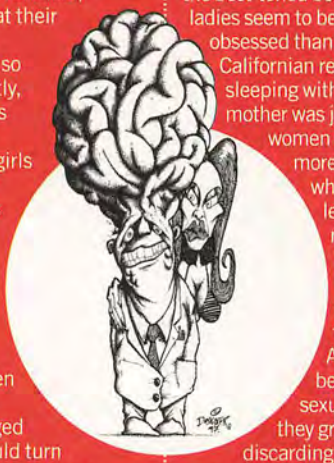
The final bell rang and I left school backed up by a few of my boney, underfed and poorly dressed mates. In the short walk over to the park, everyone was slapping me on the back. I was the freak boy, the condemned man. They all wanted a look at my face before I got it rearranged by Darrel. At the park behind the school, a 150-strong mob was already chanting, 'FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT!' Quickly the crowd began to form around Darrel and me. I just stood there in the centre of this *Lord Of The Flies*-style blood lust while he wheezed like a set of naused-up bagpipes. On cue, I began to fart spectacularly, hammering out panic tunes, and bleating a red alert on my bum trumpet. We hit and yanked each other a couple of times, spinning around in circles. I was busy pulling his hair, punching him and gouging his face when I realised that, if I lost, no one would ever look me in the eye again. Before I even realised what was happening I was throttling him. I've never looked throttling up in the dictionary, but I suppose it's the thin dividing-line between the strangle and the punch. I was turning the vicious bastard beetroot red, choking the life out of his thick neck and trying to kill him. As his lummox body started to go limp and his eyes glazed over, I could see only defeat. With a fat globule of spit hanging out of his mouth he hit the ground moaning like a fat monk. I was victorious but I felt sick. I didn't want these people cheering for me. I didn't want them to want me to win. The best day of my life? Was it bollocks. It was the worst. I would have preferred to have lost, taken a pasting and just disappeared. But I was now the 399th hardest bloke in school – a contender. It's a shame that I spoilt my new lightning-fisted reputation by crying all the way home, my bird and her mates in tow, looking at me like I was some kind of strange, homosexual alien.

PHIL ROBINSON

sex news

Come again

Sex: is it good for you or what?
Back in May, a top UK geneticist claimed that, although men are programmed to live longer than women, their lives are cut short because of a relentless thirst for sex. Picking up on the same upbeat theme, a few Yanks in white coats subsequently reported that brain cells shrink in relation to sexual activity. They also rubbished the popular notion that people with little brains are the randiest, arguing instead that their brains are smaller because they shag so much. More recently, Japanese scientists claimed the total opposite: chasing girls and competing for sex actually makes men more brainy. Trust science to complicate matters, scaring us into miserable months of abstinence and then turning round and saying that prolonged bouts of rumpy could turn an average bloke into the next Einstein. Sir Clive Sinclair – the lovin' machine.



Sperm count crisis nears
We are flat out of sperm! According to John Petersen of the Arlington Institute, the global sperm count could collapse at any time, rendering the earth barren and spermless. Recent studies around the world have suggested that sperm counts are markedly lower than a generation ago and are falling by two per cent a year. The usual suspects have been suggested as possible factors contributing to the drop: alcohol, junk food, stress, sitting down too much and tight underwear.

Toy boys get the best oats
New research has emerged which suggests that 20-something women are flops in the sack. Despite having the best-toned bodies, today's young ladies seem to be more career-obsessed than sex-obsessed. The Californian report also claimed sleeping with your girlfriend's mother was just the ticket. "As women age, they become more orgasm-driven, while men become less so," noted the report's author, Dr Helen Renshaw. "The end result for women is fantastic sex." Apparently women become more sexually voracious as they grow older, discarding old inhibitions and surrendering to hot pleasure. The 40-plus age range are the real ravers, taking the lead in bed and constantly seeking sexual thrills with younger partners. Yeah, I see Leonardo Di Caprio in Barbados next year, eating kumquats from the small of Pat Butcher's back.
NIALL HAMPTON

TRIPPING YARNS

drugs news

Ultimate rush
Methamphetamine drug labs create more dangerous waste than the finished drug. The clean-up operation will cost Californian specialists an estimated $7.65m by the end of 1997. The toxic mess includes hydrogen chloride gas and carcinogenic toxins. Fumes have been known to liquefy the paint on lab walls. Authorities say the situation may be more dangerous with the increase in meth demand and the fact that the build-up of gases and chemicals is often explosive. Lighting up could give more of a hit than expected.

Every dog has its day
Boyka, a US customs sniffer dog, has recently won the prestigious 'Dog Of The Month' for finding 1.5 tonnes ($2.8 million) of marijuana on a Mexican bus in Texas. He's part of the Canine Enforcement Programme, but denies being a hero. Boyka said all he wants is to do his duty, work with charities and sniff the arse of the spaniel who works in the armed response unit. He didn't reveal any special techniques, putting it down to his trainer and the opportunities offered to him by the US of A. He plans a lecture tour of state kennels for underprivileged mongrels.

Drug equality
Women everywhere are catching up with men in terms of drug consumption, production and distribution, according to recent surveys. They're already ahead with Prozac, which had total sales this year running into millions. It's not just happy pills, though. From teenagers to old dears, if you believe the reports, the fairer sex is tuning in, turning on and dropping out. Images of a world of junkies supported by tranq-addicted mums with bonged-out sprogs will soon become reality.

Do you wanna be in my gang?
Cocaine Anonymous, set up in 1982 and now with branches worldwide, has a self-test for prospective members to assess whether they're hooked. One question is: "Are you absorbed with thoughts of getting loaded, even while being with a loved one?" Even after the newsagent has shut? Another will have you signing up immediately: "Do you have feelings that people are talking about you or watching you?" Only on days with a 'y' in them.
PIERS TOWNLEY

ILLUSTRATIONS: DOGGER

THE IGGY POP STORY

It's Jim's first Xmas. The Osterbergs are watching their son with pride...

"I think he'll grow up to be a dentist," says Mrs O. "Or maybe a gardener," says Dad.

Clearly his parents still had no idea that one day their son would be IGGY POP!

to be contd...

MICHAEL HOLDEN/PHIL GASCOINE

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Serious Bier

MORAL DILEMMAS

This month: Brian Regan, AKA Terry Sullivan from Brookie

1 You're offered a part in a London soap. Do you get on the first train down, buy a flash pair of trousers and speak with a plumb in your mouth, thus selling out on your Liverpool roots?

I'd just turn up as I am, take the job but force them to accept me for what I am.

2 A friend knocks on your door and asks you to help him move his piano. Do you help him or do you chase him down the street because you think he's taking the piss?

Well, I'd offer him a helping hand but it would cost him a tenner.

3 What would bring you closer to God, running a religion or running a garage?

Running a garage, no question.

4 A strange man comes to your door and presents you with a blond wig. He says: "Unless you disguise your hair, a cat will die for every curl." Do you wear the wig?

No, I wouldn't wear the wig. The cats would definitely have to die, I'm afraid!

5 Your mate has decided to commit suicide and you have a chance to intervene at the crucial moment. Do you save him and risk his subsequent anger, or do you wait for him to die, then steal his wallet and nick his shoes?

Well, I'd half save him, so I could ask him exactly where his wallet and shoes were, then I'd let him die!

6 You stumble across a simple but cruel plan to eliminate the whole city of Manchester. You realise that this will make Liverpool the king of the North, but it will mean millions of innocent folk dying. Do you call the police or remain silent?

Ooh, that's a hard one isn't it? I'd make sure that Old Trafford was going to be destroyed. I wouldn't mind, so as long as that was the case I'd remain silent!

7 A bunch of Brummies nick all the buses at the local garage, resulting in hours of road chaos and inconvenience. Just as the number 19 turns up after a four hour wait, the old lady standing next to you falls over. Do you risk missing it by picking up her shopping, or do you just get on and say: "Calm down, calm down" to the horrified passengers?

Well, I'd help her up and help her with her shopping, but only because she might then remember me and put me in her will. But either way, I'd still be shouting, "Calm down, calm down!"

8 A friend of yours works in McDonald's and they're giving away free burgers to the poor. But you're starving and could do with a free feed. Do you deprive the poor to increase your girth?

No!

9 Another friend is lying in hospital in a bad way after slipping on a banana in the High Street. Do you go and see him before his condition deteriorates, or do you go to a swanky film premiere which a bevy of your favourite stars and a load of useful agents will be attending?

Well, going to the film premiere could come in handy if I got some work out of it, so I'd have to go to that. Sod the friend, he'd have to tough it out without me!

10 You're walking past a cash machine one day on a busy street when you notice £20 sticking out of the slot. You take the money and another £20 comes out. Do you carry on doing this, or do you report a fault?

Stupid question – I'd keep on taking it, obviously. It wouldn't matter how busy the street was neither!

11 A stranger arrives at a bus stop and stands in a place where you've seen traffic splash pedestrians. Do you volunteer a word of caution?

No, I like a good laugh so I'd keep my mouth firmly shut, get nice and comfy and wait for the fun to start! But I'd make sure I was firmly out of the danger zone myself first.

12 You're looking after your five-year-old niece's hamster while she is on holiday. You forgetfully feed the animal a live electric cable and it is instantly electrocuted. Do you replace the hamster before the child returns from vacation or do you tell the truth?

Erm, another toughie. I'd probably do a bit of both! I think I would replace it and then tell the kiddie the truth!

13 You borrow a lawnmower off your neighbour and instantly set about kicking it to pieces because you have nothing better to do. A year later he asks for it back. What are your options?

I wouldn't be able to avoid a neighbour so my options would be, I could get him a new one, try and get it fixed or take the cheaper and easier option and tell him it's been robbed. I'd definitely do the latter!

CHAS NEWKEY-BURDEN

A DOCTOR'S VERDICT

By a simple dissection of the Moral Dilemma questionnaire, an eminent psychologist attempts to guess the name of the celebrity.

This is some hot bird you've got me here! Big squidgy tits, eh!? I'd grab hold of her! Nurse! Grrrrrrrrr, nice'n'physical. I want the saucy mare's number, I'll fix her. Unless, that is, it's not a mare we're talking about and the mare in the quiz is a geezer. If he's a geezer he can bury himself up to his neck in vibrating snakes for all I care. Stuff him.

NEWSAGENT PROVOCATEUR

IT'S WEDNESDAY AND THE PROV'S ECZEMA HAS MADE HIM UNUSUALLY CROTCHETY...
Are you on benefits?
No... but I'd like to hang this card in your window

STRAIGHT AFTER

CREATED BY TOM. PHOTOS: BILLY. SCRIPT: MICK, JON, PHIL. STARRING: TOM, LITTLE GRAHAM. COUNTER CONSULTANT: MR PATEL. SUNGLASSES: CUTLER & GROSS

TEAC

"It's The Hi-Fi Or Me !"

It's a no-contest. Reference 500 is, without doubt, the most advanced range of individual components that combined, make up The Reference 500 Mini System. It combines the excellence of separates with the size and convenience of a small system. So when it comes to the ultimate choice, it looks like she'll just have to compromise a little.

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"TEAC mini sets standards"

WHAT HI*FI, Jan 97

Visit your TEAC Stockist for a demonstration or call TEAC on 01923 819630 for more information

TEAC

DUE TO TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES BEYOND THEIR CONTROL, OTHER MINI SYSTEMS WILL NOT BE DELIVERING THIS LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE

Chief Musical Officers' Warning

THE REVOLUTIONARY NON-LATEX DUREX AVANTI.

BECAUSE A CONDOM SHOULD PREVENT EVERYTHING EXCEPT GREAT SEX.

Welcome to the sexual revolution, part two. The Durex Avanti is the first condom to be made from a remarkable new material called Duron. Because it has double the strength of latex, we can make it much, much thinner. And that means it's much more sensitive. It doesn't stop there.

It's odour free, transparent and non allergenic. Duron also conducts heat in a far more natural way, which is just another reason why Durex Avanti is the most sensitive condom that can be made. After all, sex is the most natural act in the world. Now there's a condom that lets it stay that way.

www.durexavanti.com

Durex, Avanti and Duron are trademarks.

RAY LE OTTER

Kraken Slacks

IMPORTANT NOTICE

TROUSER RECALL

In the weeks since their coming on the market it has come to our attention that some pairs of trousers in the Krakenslacks range are unstable and must never be worn.

The Flaxen Wire Weave Bowie Pegs have been withdrawn from sale. Anyone owning a pair is asked not to wear them, no matter how stylish they may seem. Instead these slacks must be isolated and reported to the Krakenslacks hotline, pending destruction.

Also, Krakenslacks Around Town Ready Spats have killed. Pets and children rubbing against the shin/calf potion of the spats have become poorly and, in a minority of cases, died. The cryptic nature of the shin spat weave can only be guessed at. As such all spats sold should be bagged and returned to Krakenslacks. On no account should they be sported.

Both products have been on sale since November 1997 and have now been withdrawn. Krakenslacks would like to apologize to customers for any distress caused by these trousers, and stress that even now experts are working on ways to stabilize the poison pants.

*formerly trading as Krakensnacks

Krakenslacks,
a division of Krakensnacks plc

the league of GREED

what we have received...

1 Rubber masks
Tight, latex swimming cap & goggle Speedo invention that shrinks your face into a scrotum. Excellent for worrying everyone.

2 Chocolate
Rammed with caramel goo and enough chocolate to give the largest of us a coronary. Cocoa solids calmed us all.

3 Lager
Freedom-titled alcohol from the UK's first micro-brewery. Smaller than a matchbox, if you believe the rumours.

4 Liquid metal
All the iron you need for a day's work forced into liquid sachet form. A bit like sucking a hammer only better for you.

5 Pro Plus
Caffeine in tablet form gave us all the shakes and aggravated attitudes. Especially when combined with iron.

6 Shower Gel
Soap substitute that makes you smell like a fruit pastille. Also available in Tea Tree and Mint if that's your thing.

7 Sweets
The closest most of us will get to rolling our tongues around a Spice Girl and proof that they really do suck.

8 Jim Beam
The American version of whisky mixed with coke because that's how they like it. And so do we.

9 Strong booze
Thanks to Jerome Stewart at United Distillers for loads of hardcore spirits. He shall remain dear in our hearts forever.

10 Xerox
For supplying Barnet FC with a brand new copier so they can Xerox their backsides to their hearts' content.

11 CD Anarachy
Thanks to AK press for sending us loads of recordings of intellectual types with goatee beards. The revolution starts here!

12 Ginsters
The lord of all sandwiches and master of the 24hr garage kingdoms. A new range, a new world order.

13 Kwik Save
Thanks for letting us barge in and empty your shelves into our greedy mitts, even though you didn't look best pleased.

14 Cider
Apple-based brain liquifier of the best order. Brought back memories of teenage parties and hanging round the park pissed.

what we want...

Do you make any of this stuff? Want some free publicity? Then give us some free gear and we'll prattle on about how brilliant it is. Simple

Decommissioned missiles and grenades
Playstations
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The Duke of Edinburgh
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Personality disorders
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Sea monkeys
Dictionaries
Pool Table (again)
Santa' s best gear
Crusty cheese rolls
Gibson Flying V Guitar
TV X subscriptions
Hats, gloves, jerkins
Bunk beds for sleeping
Old porn films
Invites to posh girls' parties
A makeover for Dave Smoker's toothpaste
Two microwaves
Toasters
Teletubbies toys
State-of-the-art elastic band weaponry
Lego
Big butch plants for the office
False passports
Laserdisc players
Dancing shoes
Peace on Earth and goodwill to all men

HOWARD MARKS

HOWARD TAKES MUSHROOMS AND GETS ALL HISTORICAL

It was 4am. I was in Glasgow having earlier agreed to appear on TV and speak against a motion calling for tobacco to be made illegal. I had six hours to kill. Archaos was turfing out its last unconscious punters and mopping up their sweat and vomit. Someone looking like God and sounding like Om said, "Go and find some fun, guy." So I went looking for some fungi.

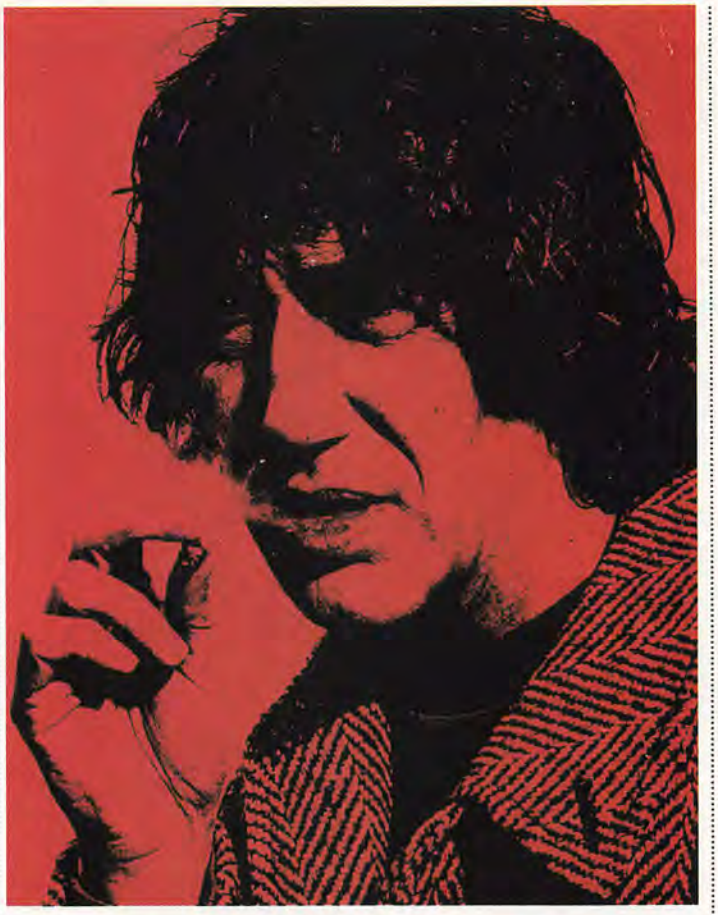
I was 100 yards away from the club when I was joined by two sexy hurling maturers, Soop and Suck, and headshop John. They had a car. A couple of hours later, we were sitting in a woody glen on a gentle slope waiting for the dawn. Several spliffs of skunk helped us think like plants and encouraged the toadstools and mushrooms to poke their psychoactive bits up through the ground around us.

I was fidgety. I didn't know whether to look at Soop's knickers or Suck's legs. I couldn't manage both. I walked alone up the hill. Eyes down. The first mushroom I found resembled what I'd imagine my dick to look like five years after I die. I definitely didn't want to eat it. I was even worried about snapping it in case my balls ached at the sound. I covered it with a condom. I started worrying, what if mushrooms had gender? What would a female one look like? Then suddenly, there they were: lots of psilocybin buttons. I ate some and stuck the rest in a bag.

Mushrooms often make me feel a little bit pukey at first. It passes if I breathe deeply for a couple of minutes. When the nausea lifted, the stars became fading strobes as the sun bullied itself through and hovered on the horizon. The mushrooms kicked in really hard. Then I felt the earth dancing around the sun. It now made total sense to me why the ancient Greeks were mushroom-eating, dope-sniffing boozers.

Over 2,000 years ago, Aristarchus (Harry Starkers) of Samos suggested – when very stoned on magic fungus – that the earth danced around the sun, not the other way round. This got the whole scene excited and edgy.

People started getting off their faces and dreaming up all kinds of bizarre scenarios. They thought new thoughts, tried new dope, lived in barrels, wore miniskirts and bathed with gold crowns.



"It made total sense to me why the ancient Greeks were mushroom-eating, dope-sniffing boozers"

But there's always an arsehole. The Jack Straw of ancient Greece, Pericles, couldn't handle not being at the centre of the universe, so he jailed Harry Starkers. Lifted him off. No sex, no drugs, no parole.

God had apparently told Joshua that the earth didn't dance. All who had thought otherwise were deemed too fucking stoned for their own good and would be given long prison stretches by a long line of Jack Straw men called Popes.

A non-dancing earth concept was forced on humanity for over 1,000 years until Copernicus (Copper Knickers) sorted it: the earth danced but the sun didn't.

Then Albert (One Stone) Einstein suggested they were all dancing: earth, moon, planets, comets, sun, stars, sparks and shite, so no one should give a fuck. The Nazis and Yanks both wanted One Stone because he knew the secret of how to make really big mushrooms. Smoky, cloudy ones. I wondered why little mushrooms, Japanese dicks and nuclear bomb smoke signals were the same shape. Surely there must be some reason for it.

From the top of the hill, I could see the mast of an approaching sailing boat. More of the mast emerged. Finally, the whole boat was in view, also dancing. The sea was waving.

The mushrooms kicked in. I then realised that the world obviously had to be round. If it was flat, I'd have seen the bottom of the boat at the same time as the top. The curvature of the earth made me see the top of the boat first. This happens everywhere, therefore the world must be a fucking huge football. So why did they give us this bullshit in school about guys in the old days thinking the world was flat? I even remember being told by a grey- haired, menopausal schoolteacher that Columbus discovered the world to be round, and that before then, sailors were paranoid about sailing off the edge of the world.

The boat came further into view. The last time I'd seen anything like that was off Scotland at dawn on New Year's Day, 1980. The boat was carrying 15 tonnes of Colombian weed. I got nostalgic. I do sincerely miss big time scamming. The nearest I can get to it now is playing dope-dealing games and skinning up in cop stations. I'll have to go back to smuggling one day. In the meantime, I'm going to find out who the best scammers are. (Play my game at http://www.weaveworld.co.uk/game – I'm keeping a list of high scorers.)

Back at the woody fairy glen, Soop had fallen asleep, Headshop John was giggling between hiccups while Suck had grabbed a dead and putrid toad from its stool and was sucking the warts off its back.

"I simply have to debate," I said. Sweaty and dirty, I faced the panel.

"Of course I want tobacco to stay legal. What the fuck do you think I make my spliffs out of? I don't charge you for passive smoking. If you don't like smoking, take a tab of ecstasy first, and light up when you dance... You'll like it then." ■

You can e-mail Howard Marks at: http://www.weaveworld.co.uk/howardmarks/

actua SOCCER 2

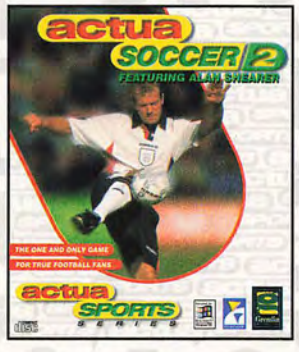
One game even Shearer cannot miss...

Forget everything else this season. **Actua Soccer 2** brings you true football on Sony PlayStation and PC CD-ROM.

Barry Davies is joined in the commentary box by expert analyser **Trevor Brooking**.

The young **Liverpool** superstar **Michael Owen** provides superb player movement and action.

For the ultimate test, take on **Alan Shearer's All Star XI**, chosen by the man himself.



THE ONE AND ONLY GAME FOR TRUE FOOTBALL FANS

In-Game shots taken from the PC and PlayStation versions

actua SPORTS SERIES

PlayStation

PC CD ROM

POWERVR

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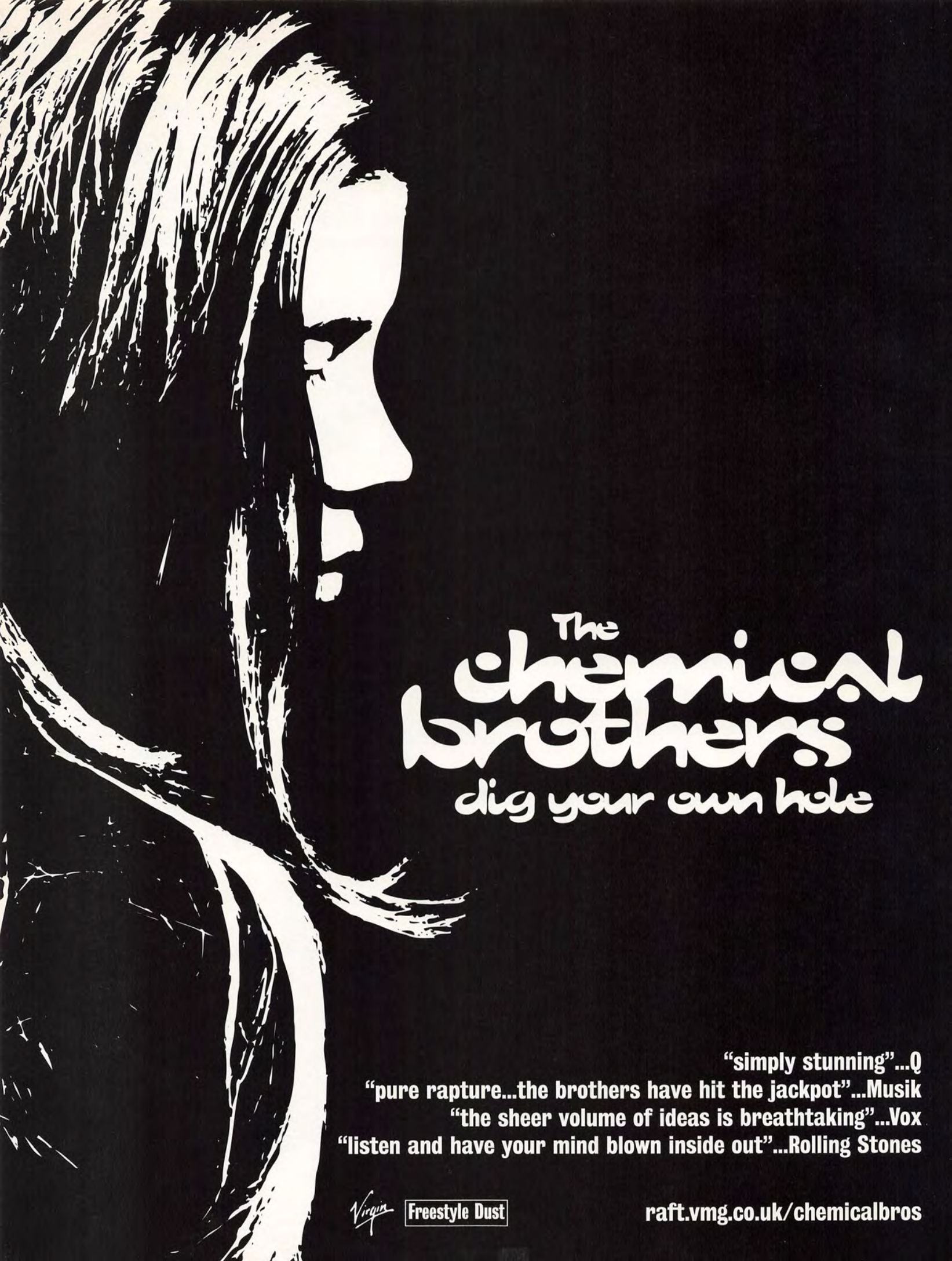
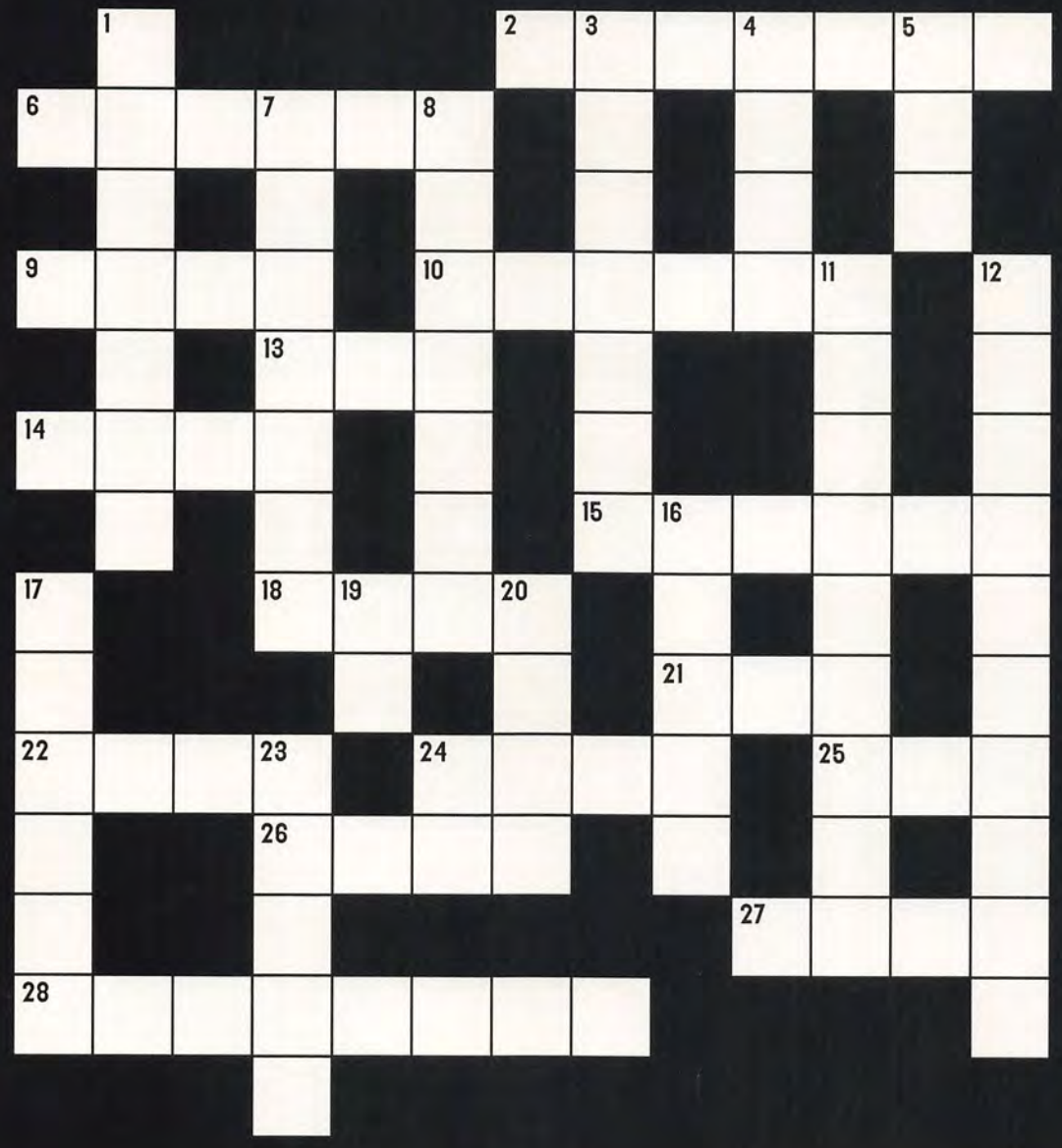

The
chemical
brothers
dig your own hole
"simply stunning"...Q
"pure rapture...the brothers have hit the jackpot"...Musik
"the sheer volume of ideas is breathtaking"...Vox
"listen and have your mind blown inside out"...Rolling Stones
Virgin
Freestyle Dust
raft.vmg.co.uk/chemicalbros

rogue

TEA-BREAK SIZED NO PRIZE CROSSWORD



Across

2 Gay footballer in a rush, but à la mode with it (7)
6 Terrorist veg, am I missing? (6)
9 Run, run orange fox, you are the prince of the forest. Four letters, starts with 'G' (4)
10 I'll shit in your head when you die! (6)
13 Yo! Gurt, leave this place, I need to be home with my 'B' (3)
14 I can smell my crunchy breakfast, yet presently it is lunchtime. How? (4)
15 Popular squirrel spelt wrong (6)
18 Edible coffins (4)
21 Camp draper in department store, lost your man? Join me for a drink and I'll stick my big 'n' up your polished end (3)
22 The continuous passage of existence in which events pass from a state of potentiality in the future, through the present, to a state of finality in the past (4)
24 You can see through my agony (4)
25 With Moynihan and all my friends in the water I provide battle for moneyed idiot Tarquins (3)
26 Bumblegit-faced Barry, when cornered has no point of view. TV's fat muppet in the shade (4)
27 Chase me bucket-headed space Hitler, I have the force. Begins with 'J' (4)
28 Sick dog's skin makes room stink like kippers? (3,5)

Down

1 Mmm slim Nordic fishy, I'm downstream, be my little dishy (7)
3 Bring me the gun Miss Mavis, the sherry's made Sir Arthur pop like a blister (3,4)
4 Smell him in the corner with his street glands, it's kitchen footballer slang (4)
5 The Queen Mum (3)
7 Spotlights chill my smacked up arse, but there's no ice around? (4,3)
8 I'm the muscle joist. The Porcine muscle joist. Idiot. Twat (3,4)
11 You won't find me in the middle of Stuart Pearce's snarling working class face (5,4)
12 The ability to produce fruits and flowers in rapid succession (10)
16 Tumefacting organ spew fills my nostrils, I am the slave of the yellow soup (5)
17 Feline escape vehicle (3,3)
19 Bathroom cleaner, no 'J' (2)
20 Stop chasing me round the playground you bullies. Because I run like a knock-kneed girl and my mother's job has some connection with this school? (4)
23 Fill my arsehole up with suds you brainbox (5)

rogue

NOW YOU'RE STALKING

The winner this month will "feel good" with a brand new **Zeitner Commando Watch**. It not only has three little dials but a rotating bezel, thus making it a brilliant watch. Three runners-up, marked by starbursts, win a **Vodafone Zap! pager**, stylishly coloured for the millennium. The rest of the photo-friendly submissions each win their owners a ***Con Air*** video. But don't despair; you can buy the video if you're over 18. It's been out since 2 Dec. Photos please, but make copies.

Bill shows 'em he's still The Gaffer. Magic!

Huggy & friends just before the fashion police raid

Sandals and socks! Poke his eyes out, Woody

Congratulations Daniel, papa's got a brand new watch for you

Robert finds John looking like he hurts all over

Dan and friend ask El Tel if he's got any tinnies

Charlie asks Robert to explain this power/people thing again

Father Time has been good to Feargal Sharkey

Lemmy shows Craig what he found up his nose

Not dictating now are you Nicolai?

PUTTING THE APERTURES UP THE RICH & FAMOUS THIS MONTH ARE: Dan of Cheshire, David O'Dell of London, Charlie of Northants, John Carroll of Huddersfield, Tristan Anderson of London, Robert DeBorsey of Bolton, Martin Walker of Bristol, Daniel Lewis of London, Pete Dyke of Liverpool, Craig Robertson of Dundee. Send your pictures to Now You're Stalking, **loaded**, IPC Magazines, King's Reach Tower, Stamford St, London SE1 9LS

THE GLORY OF THE OPEN ROAD.
VAST UNTAMED SPACES,
THE WIND IN YOUR HAIR,
EXPLORING TERRITORY AS
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TAR, BUT NO TAR VERY MUCH.

60% LESS TAR THAN EMBASSY NO.1.

SMOKING CAUSES HEART DISEASE

Chief Medical Officers' Warning
5mg Tar 0.5mg Nicotine

rogue

IRVINE WELSH

The Trainspotting author DJing, partying and overdoing it again

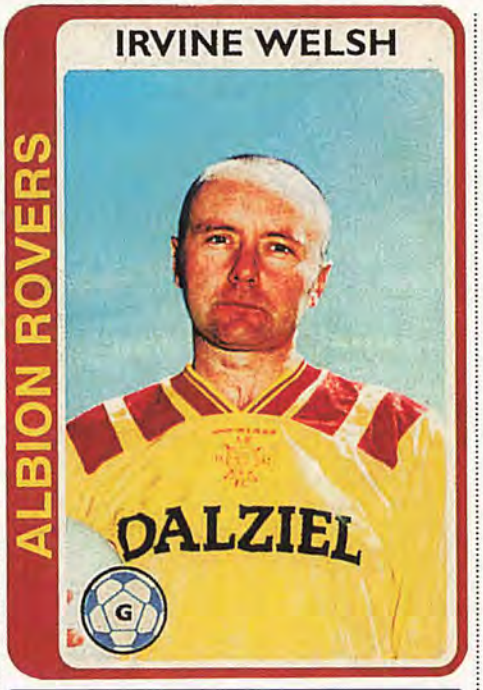
I started DJing about a year ago when I gate-crashed a Turkish party in North London. The music was interesting, but hardly kicking. A search on my part unearthed a pile of Northern Soul classics stashed under the table. I hit the decks and haven't been off them since, for those who might be wondering where the next book is. A pal unkindly remarked, "Music's loss is literature's gain."

The other week saw me back in San Francisco on a seven-day DJing tour of the city organised by my old buddy and Celtic soul brother, Manred's Tomas O'Halloran. I was spinning, as they say, in SF with my pals DJ Wiseblood and Johnny 2 Baad and we were whipping up a veritable storm of hip-hop, house, ritualistic dance music and reactionary pre-millennium disco (the last one attributable to me).

The idea was that we would play club nights on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and then take the magic bus and the sound system upstate along the Pacific coast on the Saturday night. After this, we planned to head straight up for the legendary Endup Club before finishing the spin at the appropriately named Top on Sunday night. And we did it. Well, almost.

I must confess that 2 Baad and myself called off the Thursday gig at Liquid, leaving Wiseblood to hold the fort. We bumped into my friend Michelle in the Mission district and repaired to a nearby bar. 2 Baad set out his stall by sticking around 30 bucks' worth of tunes on the jukebox. So no way were we leaving that boozer for anything as frivolous as placing pieces of vinyl on a couple of Technics. Besides, the barman liked the vibe we were giving out and turned up the jukey, then started issuing us with complimentary drinks.

At some point, Michelle went away to meet her date, and 2 Baad and I staggered onto the Bart underground system, taking trains in the opposite direction to each other, but still somehow managing to meet up in the Tenderloin district. We got back to the hotel via a couple of sleazy cocktail bars and went round the liquor stores to see if we could find any Old Purple Tin, that grand Scotch lager immortalised in the Alabama 3 song of the same name. Fortunately we were unsuccessful, but we ran into a guy called Ed who was the double of Tom out of the Chemical Brothers. By the way, sorry about going on a bit about the Old Purple Tin. 2 Baad, being from North Shields, was intrigued to note that they sold Newcastle Brown Ale at the hotel bar. After guzzling a bottle he was violently sick over the bar, so we decided to beat a strategic withdrawal up to the Edinburgh Castle pub, where Alan and Paul took us on to The Liquid Club to catch the end of Wiseblood's gig.



"We were whipping up a storm of hip-hop, house, ritualistic dance and reactionary pre-millennium disco"

So that was the sole blip on the itinerary. Mind you, Wiseblood damaged her ankle and was in such pain that she had to visit Tom's Chinese doctor, who sorted her out.

Thanks to that Chinese doctor, and beyond words thanks again to Laura, the vodka promotion model from Boston who saved me from drowning in the hotel pool.

Saturday was a good one on the mushrooms. 2 Baad and myself were wastedly telling everyone that we were from North Shields and Leith, rather than Newcastle and Edinburgh. It seemed important to specify. Not that anybody else gave a toss. I saw the most beautiful starry sky I'd ever seen. It boasted more and brighter stars than you might be expected to find on a Saturday afternoon at Easter Road. Come Sunday we were seriously flagging and crashed out asleep in the pub. Nice one to Jim and Aidan for reviving us with Bloody Marys so we could go on to the gig at The Top.

I arrived back thinking that now I could take it easy. Then the horrible truth dawned on me: I had a gig on Friday at Backbeat in Leeds (ex-Back To Basics) with Kris Needs. From a sizzling frying pan straight into a blazing fire – Needsy and The Basics Crew via the Aylesbury posse.

My next break will be with Wallace Arnold, no doubt about that. There's just the small matter of Bugged Out in Manchester and The Heavenly Social in London to get through first. Aaaaaggghhhh... ◼

Strange but true

In Los Angeles, two friends died while arguing in a bar. Jim Carn said that murder was easy to get way with, while Pete Shirkley declared that a victim could always shoot back. Carn then picked up a pistol and shot Shirkley, who retaliated by shooting Carn.

A man was so depressed that his obsessive/compulsive behaviour was making him wash his hands over 100 times a day that he shot himself in the head. He was surprised to wake up alive and find that the bullet had smashed through the part of his brain that had caused the problem, allowing him to live a relatively normal life.

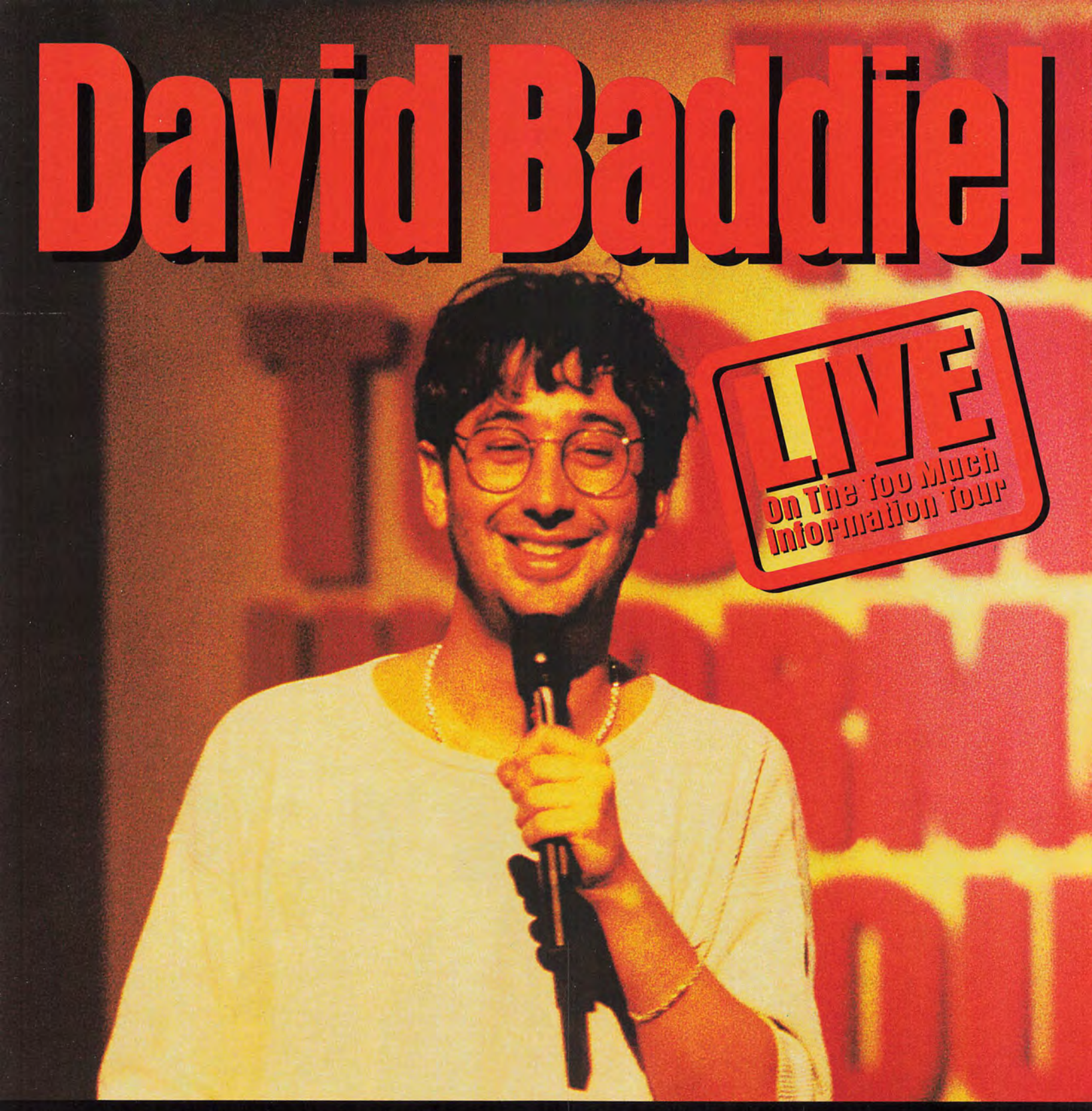
Police in Houston, Texas report that a man has been sneaking up behind women and dumping cans of soup on their heads. "It seems like fun now," said a police spokesman, "but there could be trouble if he starts to heat the soup first."

A mortuary driver from Santa Ana, California, was fined $58 for being in a lane reserved for drivers with passengers. His defence was that the frozen bodies he had on board made him eligible for the lane. He objected to Judge John Stanford's description of the corpses as "cargo", noting that his mother had died recently and that he hoped no one would refer to her by that description.

The New England Journal of Medicine reported that a Canadian woman contracted mercury poisoning after repeatedly digesting a fresh Kleenex box and a cigarette packet every morning for a period of 12 years.

David Rhodes, former manager of a Pennsylvania branch of the Century National Bank, was sentenced to three years in prison after admitting to having spanked more than 50 customers who had been late in repaying bank loans.

David Baddiel



Star of BBC's Fantasy Football League live on stage talking about everything from the Spice Girls to the ways in which people died in the 17th Century; with perhaps a tiny bit about football, and a tiny bit about sex.

OUT ON VIDEO NOW

Available HMV, Menzies, WH Smith and all other good video retailers

PNE VIDEO

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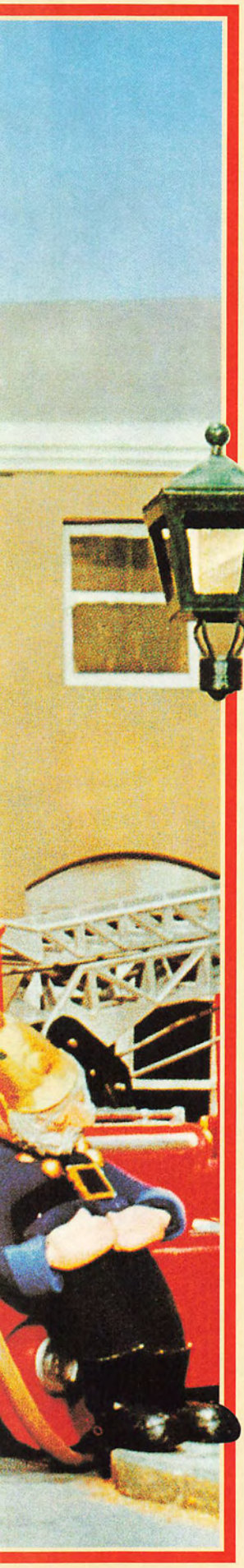

Cuthbert's hose seemed
to have a life of its own.

THE LYNX EFFECT

‘Stop! Stop!
I want to gobble you up!’
she shouted.

THE LYNX EFFECT

1/ With optional 400 mAh Lithium Ion battery. 2/ With optional 4000 mAh Lithium Ion battery; without recharging. 3/ Please refer to the exact terms and conditions for complete description.

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- ❑ Pint-gripping fists
- ❑ Warped sense of justice
- ❑ Will in-breed with female companions of figure A, 'Grant'

B PHIL
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A GRANT

"Alright, Ma?" You will be when you see the detail on East End Characters flagship figure, Grant. With a capacity for mindless violence and his own pub, children will love playing with poseable Grant. Till he hits them.

- ❑ Punching hands
- ❑ Uncontrollable Falklands flashbacks
- ❑ Will in-breed with female companions of figure B, 'Phil'

A GRANT
£12.99

C ALAN
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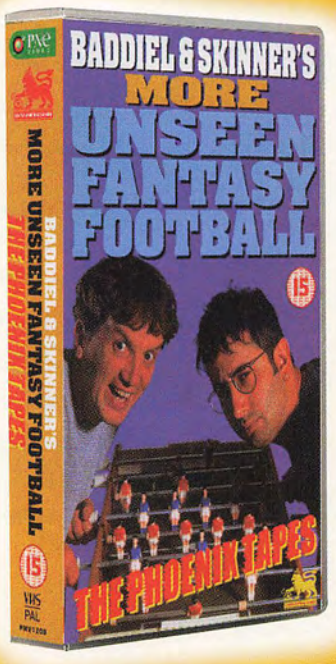

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EDDIE LITTLE

Jazzman and the art of flying kites: if you've just opened a bank account, check your statement now

The fence surrounding the loading dock and parking area at the post office is only about six feet high, if that. Street lights add to the glow from the spotlights illuminating the loading dock. The concept is that this much light will discourage thieves. Yeah. Like fresh blood discourages a shark.

As Jazzman and his partner hurtle the fence and dash across the pavement leading to their goal, traffic is going by, a few people are walking around, and the security lights make it easy to pick the packages they want. The area behind the building is all theirs unless somebody calls the cops. And we all know that won't happen.

On the dock are rows of canvas-sided carts, each cart filled with bulk mail, garbage by the ton. Publishers' Clearing House, coupons, flyers for all kinds of crap and the boxes full of personal checks sent out by banks for their new customers. Garbage. One man's junk mail is another man's treasure.

Digging frantically through the bins and grabbing the bags full of their targeted material. The bags of checks from spanking new accounts. Checks that the owners won't even know are missing until they find their accounts are not only empty, they now have checks bouncing all the way to the moon.

Dumping the sacks in a pile until carrying any more would be impossible. Grabbing three or four bags in each hand and sprinting across the parking lot, hurling the bags over the fence and flying over after them. Tossing them into the trunk of Jazzman's Cad and rolling towards home. Step one is out of the way. Now the real work starts, putting the whole thing together, a check cashing ring that works fast and smart. A relatively simple exercise for a guy that graduated from one of our finer colleges with honours.

Getting back to the hood and entering their low-income housing project. Undoing all the locks that make the solid steel door, if not

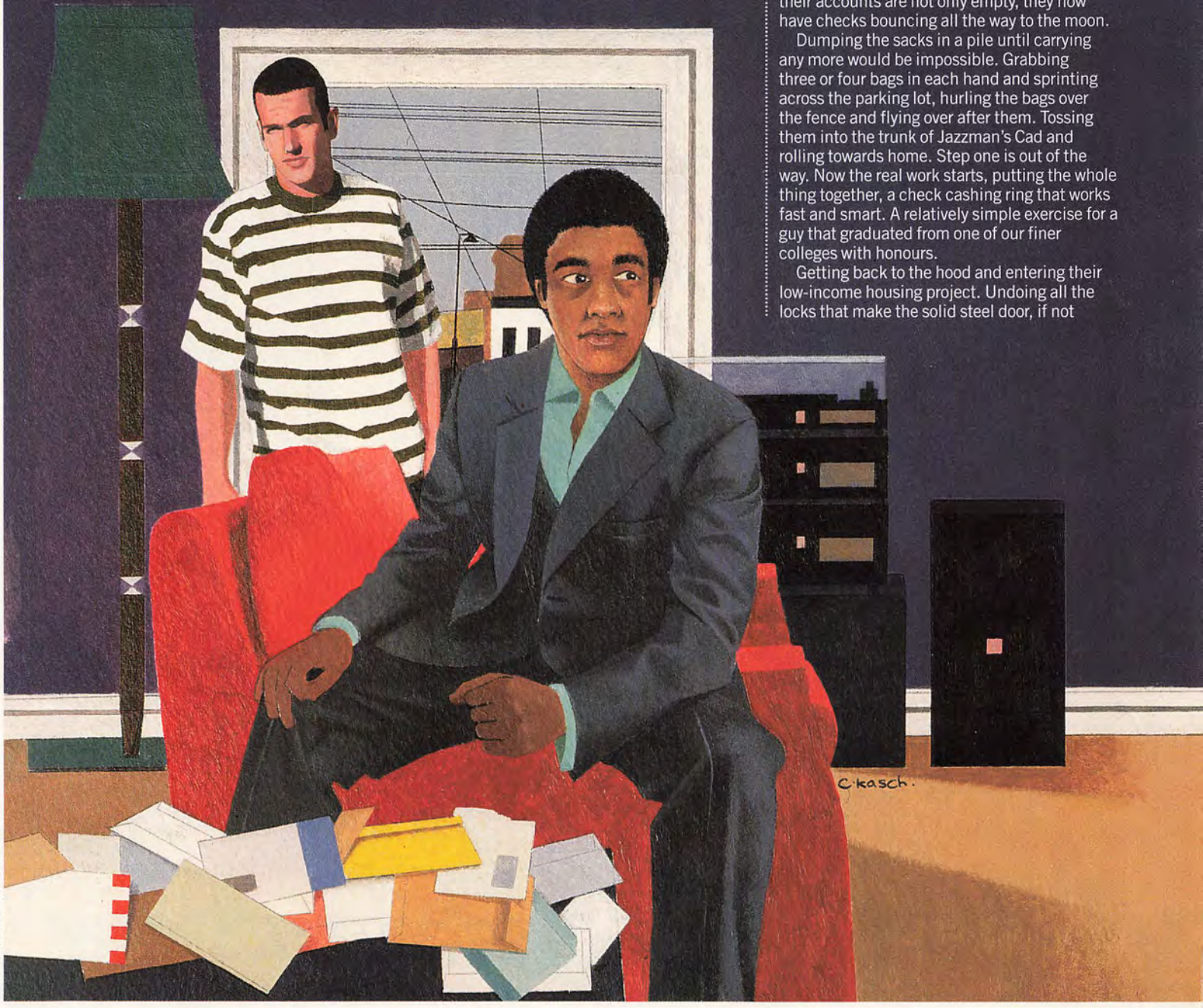


ILLUSTRATION: CHRISTOPHER KASCH

unforceable, then at least unattractive to burglars. Home sweet home. Unlike the squalor surrounding them, Jazzman and his partner have entered a pad that could be featured in *Apartment Beautiful* if only the photographer could make it out of the projects in possession of both camera and health. Jazzman has good taste, understated elegance is the motto of his home. He turns on a boss CD system and the jazz he loves fills the room.

His thing is to be cool, cool like dry ice. When they empty the bags on the living-room table there is no sense of excitement. Just two professionals working. Counting the boxes of checks and making a list of the names that must be on the identification that they will obtain tomorrow. Discussing what people will be on which team, who's available. Matching the names on the checks to kiters that Jazzman feels look like they could belong to that name.

The majority of the paper will go to the home town team, a crew from right there in Jazzman's hood. Steins, Burgs or Manns go to a very small group of pros living on the West side who indeed look like nice Jewish boys and girls. Garcia, Lopez or anything Hispanic will be transferred to a crew from a barrio a little bit north-east of the projects that Jazzman lives in. Those that have a Teutonic, Slavic or cowboy sound to them go to an outfit from the other side of the Hollywood Hills.

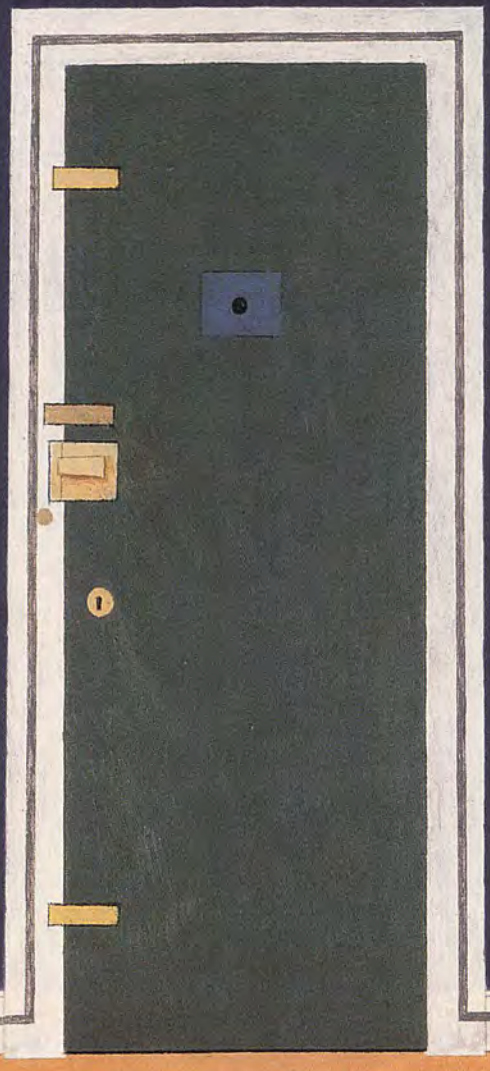
Jazzman says that the colour green is the great equaliser. The spoon that stirs the melting pot that is the good old US of A. As long as cash money is involved, normal social lines dissolve in ways that bussing and court orders can't ever approach for effectiveness. Using a cellular phone, Jazzman contacts the men and women who will actually be flying the kites, and arranges for a caravan to form and head to the part of downtown LA where fake drivers licences and back-up ID can be obtained both inexpensively and quickly, about a hundred bucks a copy with a couple of hours wait. The thing to remember is that these IDs are good for only cashing checks, or to run merchandise out of a store. If a cop runs the numbers on the front or the mag strip on the back, it's panic time. You better get out of Dodge as fast as you can.

Jazzman says that when he was attending college he majored in Business Admin, and all the theories taught there apply to this particular field of endeavour. Most of the profit involved in this line of work comes from custom-ordered items and from merchandise going to re-sellers; only a small percentage actually coming from cashing the checks.

When a crew hits an area they are issued the checks and the ID. A strategy session is quickly held and the group caravans to the different malls and areas they're working. One big truck following and parking a couple of blocks from where the paper is actually being passed.

As the flyers come out with the merchandise, Jazzman pays 20 per cent of the retail ticket in cash and the goods are loaded up onto the truck. It's a 40/60 split on checks actually cashed, another few thousand dollars that is all gravy. A good day would leave Jazzman between 15 and 20 thousand in pocket. Not time or labour intensive. Lovely.

It could have lasted forever – strong marketing, great management, incredible interpersonal skills, cost of living increases built right into the program. Absolutely part of the American dream. Jazzman had it wired.



The only problem was one that is so common it has become a cliché. Good help is hard to find.

One of his people got busted, a righteous childhood companion, one that was close enough to run a police sting right into the centre of the deal, and when we get to this part of the story our entrepreneurial genius laughs and says, "Sheeeit. Ya got all these stone gangsters, talkin' shit 24-7-365, good mud-holding motherfuckers. Right? If ya go for that one, I got a bridge for sale in Brooklyn. My homeboy rolled and everyone that could did the same. All those stand-up bangin' motherfuckers. Left me hanging in the wind. Now the fact is that maybe I would've done the same. You never know how you gonna act till you under the gun, but I gotta tell you *that shit got all my attention.* All of it, every fuckin' bit. Spending multiple summers locked down is not something I aspired to. All the racial shit, if you and me was talkin' in there, hangin' out like this, we'd both get killed by our own people. It's all about territory. Bunch of sorry motherfuckers all of 'em.

"I'm a smart motherfucker, I've always known that. I'll do whatever I got to do on the violence side. I just don't like it, don't prove shit or solve shit."

Now Jazzman starts changing vernacular in mid-sentence from straight-up Penitentiary Ebonics to sounding like Yale instead of Jail. "Going through school I got straight As, made the Dean's list in college, but I was bent towards criminal enterprises. Started putting little shit together; a scam here, a hustle there. Make some extra cash. You know. So what started off as a lark became a business, almost an obsession. Getting busted was almost a good thing. Doing time gave me all the time to think, to actually see what fools my so-called peers were. I decided that the only thing 'The Life' really offers a motherfucker is the pen and the graveyard. I knew I had the brains and the drive to make it no matter what life threw at me, as long as I didn't self-destruct. That self-knowledge inspired me to see if I couldn't make it in a straight business once I got out. I've been real successful so far. You know the rest, *none of us* know what tomorrow is going to bring. Catch ya on the rebound, brother."

Jazzman still listens to jazz. As he drives away in his 1997 leather-seated Northstar-powered Cad I can hear a saxophone wailing through the driver's side window and across the parking lot, sounding like success.

His thing is to be cool, cool like dry ice. When they empty the bags on the table there is no sense of excitement. Just two professionals working

The Young offender

Blade Runner's Sean Young has upset some Hollywood folk in her time

Since catapulting to fame as Rachael in *Blade Runner* back in 1982, Sean Young certainly seems to have rubbed Hollywood up the wrong way. Top directors Oliver Stone and Tim Burton are just two Tinseltown types who've had problems dealing with the mercurial star, who once claimed she was blacklisted by studio suits. Despite her reputation for being difficult to work with, Sean's appeared alongside heavyweights Kevin Costner (*No Way Out*), James Woods (*The Boost*) and Jim Carrey (*Ace Ventura: Pet Detective*). Now, 15 years after Ridley Scott's seminal sci-fi flick, Sean has featured in the making of the forthcoming *Blade Runner* CD-ROM computer game by doing a voiceover and being specially filmed so that her likeness as replicant Rachael could be reproduced.

How did you get the *Blade Runner* role?
I auditioned twice for it and then the director Ridley Scott wanted me – he felt that I could handle it. He knew I was new but he thought I had a certain look that he really liked.

How did you actually find working with Ridley and Harrison Ford?
Ridley Scott was wonderful – he's a real detail master. I was pretty new and didn't know Harrison very well, but he's a hard worker.

Were you ever interested in doing a sequel?
I don't think Harrison liked the movie much – I've heard from various people that he wasn't happy with it – but I always thought it was wonderful and ahead of its time. I think you'd pretty much need Harrison to do a sequel, wouldn't you? But maybe not, these days...

What do you think contributed to the cult status of the movie?
Two things: the fact that it was the first cyber movie, although it maybe didn't intend to be, as well as a futuristic movie which made a projection about the future.

Do you like sci-fi?
I like anything that's done well. It's like food (I like any kind of food except liver), it's how you put it together. There are a lot of factors that go into making stuff come together; sometimes they're there and sometimes they're not.

What don't you like about liver?
How it tastes. Liver is not one of my favourite things. I never did like it.

Does your husband like it?
Hah hah, let's get off the liver issue!

Do you think androids do dream of electric sheep?
Erm... I have no idea what you're talking about. I don't know any androids personally, so I haven't a clue.

Since *Blade Runner*, you've mainly become known for playing stroppy sexpots instead of sympathetic characters. Why's that?
In the last five or eight years or so, I haven't been offered very good parts. I'm grateful for the work, though, even if it's not in A-list movies. Some parts I've loved and some I haven't enjoyed as much, probably because they're not as high-quality as I believe I'm able to do.

But you had a big hit with *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective*. Does Jim Carrey pull those stupid faces when he's off-set?
He is different off-screen when he's not doing his thing – most of the time. He's wonderful, he's a really good time. He's funny, he's generous, he's hard-working and really sweet.

Which role have you disliked the most?
I don't know – there's been a few. But I've liked getting paid and being able to take care of my family. I remember that a lot more than what I didn't like about a particular movie.

The British press have described you as a wicked, wanton woman. Are you really that bad?
Basically, that's just a load of shit. There's not many people who actually know me that have negative things to say about me, unless they've been a guy I've turned down because I didn't want to sleep with them, hah hah. That's an entirely different matter.

You moved to Arizona to get away from Hollywood. Do you have a negative attitude towards it, even in the nicest possible way?
No, people are very nice to me now. When I go

"The toughest thing is being smarter than everyone else"

to Los Angeles, I get a lot of respect from actors as well as from some directors and producers. The corporate side of Hollywood is still under a deep illusion that I'm not nice, but that's just because they have no idea what they're talking about and no experience with me to prove otherwise.

Is there anything you hate about men?
No.

There must be something you don't like.
I love men – men are great.

So you don't mind having a man's name, then?
My mom thought I was going to be a boy so she called me Sean, but then I was a girl, so she put Mary in front of it – her first name is Mary and that's how it worked. But she always liked my boy name best and called me by it. I like it too. It's due to my Irish background.

You're an autograph-hunting actress. How many books have you filled?
About five.

Which one means the most to you?
They're all good. I don't really have a favourite.

What's behind the autograph hunting? Did you start as a child?
No, I started it as a professional. I was so shy that, when I met other people who were in the business, it was a way for me to humble myself when I approached them, hah hah. It's true – I just would be very shy when meeting new people.

What's the worst job you've ever had?
The hardest job is always going to be talking to the press.

Why?
There's no control or guarantees. There can be some, depending on what level you're operating at, but there's just something about everyone wanting to know things about you that's kinda mysterious to me. I don't know – some people might be able to understand why anybody would be interested in them, but I've never really been able to figure that out about myself. Can you hang on one second... my son just spilled chocolate milk on himself and he's got school pictures today, hah hah, and I have to run over and give him a new shirt.

What's the toughest thing about being Sean Young?
Good question. The toughest thing is being smarter than everybody and having to be a little bit lonely as a result of it. It's not smarter like, I can fuck you out of a million dollars smarter – you know what I mean? Some people think that's smart and they're welcome to it. It's smarter in the knowledge that all the things you do will come back to you. It's important to be spiritually awake.

Do you resent being famous at all?
No, I don't resent famousness. Even if I were more famous, I think I would probably handle it with a great deal of practicality. I don't really resent that many things any more, although I feel saddened sometimes that a few bad men were really able to harm my career. There's no justice in that.

Do you feel bitter about that?
Well, like I said, I don't. Maybe I should, but I have a pretty happy life out here. The key to true happiness is being able to be happy wherever you are, no matter what your circumstances are. Obviously, money and success can make the journey better, but it's not gonna make you any happier to be any richer if you can't find a way of pulling a good attitude from yourself each day. People who get more and more successful do hopefully realise that. They go, "Shit, I thought being rich, powerful and famous was going to make me happier and it hasn't. Why not?" But I feel pretty happy tonight. I have a peaceful life, I get to travel and I get to work and I feel very grateful for the offers I do get and, you know something? It's not over till it's all over.

NIALL HAMPTON

Blade Runner, *the 3D real-time action/adventure game, is now on release nationwide on PC CD-ROM by Virgin Interactive, priced £44.99.*

Sean froze. This was the *Dynasty* set

PHOTOS: RONALD GRANT/VIRGIN INTERACTIVE

"Cut. My wig's on fire"

EXILE on Ramsay Street

story by PETE STANTON
photos by STEPHEN PERRY

Nicola Charles, the best thing we've sent to Oz since all those convicts

WHEN CAPTAIN JAMES COOK FIRST LANDED ON THE SHORES OF Australia in 1770 and pronounced that, "It's not unlike Southport, is it?" little did he know that his actions would make him England's first big attraction down under. Since then we've given the Australians scurvy, beer, sheep, crisps, the Ashes, Terry Venables and now Nicola Charles. The last one on this list we are only loaning to them. Nicola is *Neighbours*' latest fancy woman, playing the eternally wound-up but ever-so-appealing Sarah Beaumont. With a cocktail of Brazilian and German parentage, Nicola was brought up in Worcestershire, and at 27 she's already been a model and married someone for a total of six weeks; she currently goes out with the blond beefcrate from *Flipper* Scott Michaelson (who also played surf-dude Brad Willis in *Neighbours*), and promotes her own lingerie line. The only difference between her and Captain Cook is that she looks better in tights and he was eaten by cannibals in Hawaii. On the phone to her house in Melbourne, **loaded** delays her impending evening with her boyfriend to ask her about setting fire to her jumper and shit like that. ✈

MAKE-UP & STYLING BY NICOLA CHARLES USING MAC COSMETICS
HAIR BY MICHAEL SHERRIDAN & KUSC MURPHY, MELBOURNE

"I was look
shat itself.

Where are you going tonight then?

"There's a really nice restaurant near here me and Scott are going to."

How are you coping living with the Aussies then?

"I've adjusted quite well, actually. I kind of work most of the time so I guess I could be anywhere. The fact that the weather's a bit warmer only helps really. I've just bought a house here and I'm making a home for myself now, but I guess England will still always be my home."

Have you run over a kangaroo yet?

"Er, no. I ran over a deer once when I was in England. That was terrible because its mother was standing at the end of the lane shouting for it. I took it to the RSPCA and it died."

Your accent sounds like it's changed since you've been over there...

"Oh no, does it sound terrible?"

No, not at all. Well you know, a bit, well yes it does actually.

"Do I sound like an Aussie?"

What sort of dreams do you have?

"I've been having terrible dreams recently. Somebody told me it's got something to do with the equinox and I have no idea what that means."

Well isn't that when the sun and moon are in conjunction with Mars and then Jupiter gets involved too, er, no I don't know either.

"Apparently everyone's dreaming a lot at the moment. But mine are so horrific that I keep my *1,000 Dreams Interpreted* book right next to the bed. I've been dreaming a lot about lizards of late, which apparently is a very bad omen. The book says something like a friend's going to do something wrong by me or something. It's quite scary."

It could be complete arse too, mind you.

"Well I believe it. Stuff like dreaming about toothache relates to your family."

When was the last time you committed a crime?

"Today on my pushbike, I went through a red light." ✈

ing round the back end of a cow and it This green goo splattered all over me"

I can tell there's some English in there fighting to get out.

"Mmmm. I won't allow myself to say stuff like 'g'day' and 'this arvo'. They often put words like that in my script but I get rid of them. My character on *Neighbours* was born in Tasmania and lived in London for 14 years, so I think my accent is as correct as I can get it. I've tried so hard to not sound too Australian. You've got me worried now."

I wouldn't worry about it. Do you think the British get a strange reaction over there?

"Yeah, it's weird. They think we don't wash and never change our underwear. It's funny because we say that about the French, don't we?"

Do you change your underwear every day?

"Yes."

Is it true that your visa for Australia is only valid as long as you stay with your fella, Scott?

"Er, yes, initially, but it's not any more. When I first came over they granted me temporary residency here on the basis of our relationship."

So basically if he'd dumped you, you'd have had to come home?

"Well... I guess if I was a shallow enough person to stay with someone for that reason, but I'm far too headstrong for that. Scott used to live in England and they didn't allow him to stay, we were kind of pushed out over to Australia really. It wasn't a decision we made."

How much do you see of each other?

"Well, he's in the other room now, haha. Quite a bit, I suppose."

He's muscly your bloke, isn't he?

"He's nothing unusual for Australia. When he was in London he stuck out like a sore thumb, but in Australia if you don't go to the gym then people ask you what's wrong."

So you're not keen on the puny, pale, ill-looking English type, then?

"Oh no, I didn't go for him because he's got a gorgeous body – I mean, he has but I've been out with plenty of guys who haven't."

As regards your brief marriage (to a kick-boxer called Shaun Cochrane), has it put you off getting married now?

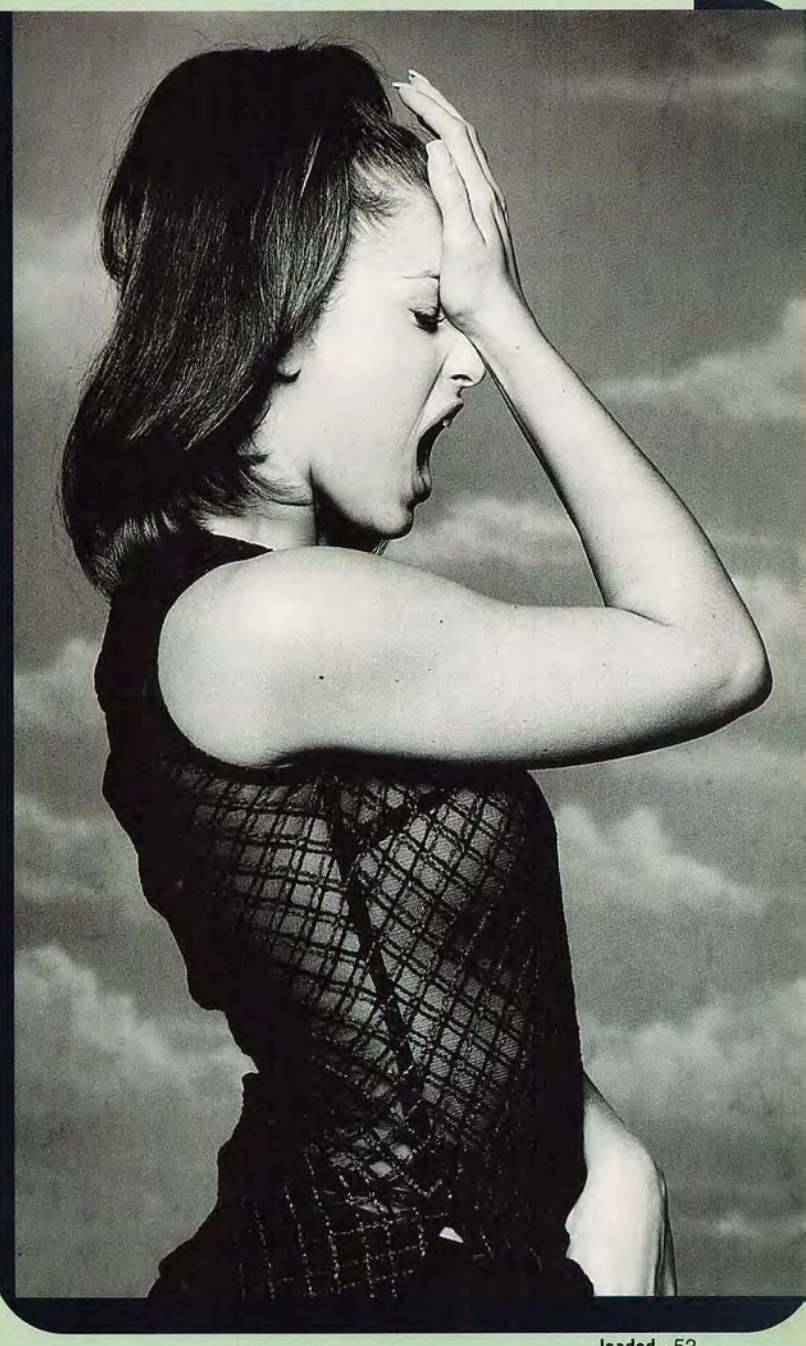
"Yes. I was never someone who'd rush into something like that. I blame my hormones, they were all up the wall at the time. At least I'm still friends with Shaun, though. I'm a bit more practical now anyway – if I was going to spend £60,000 on a wedding I'd rather spend it on an extension on the house. I'm a bit boring like that."

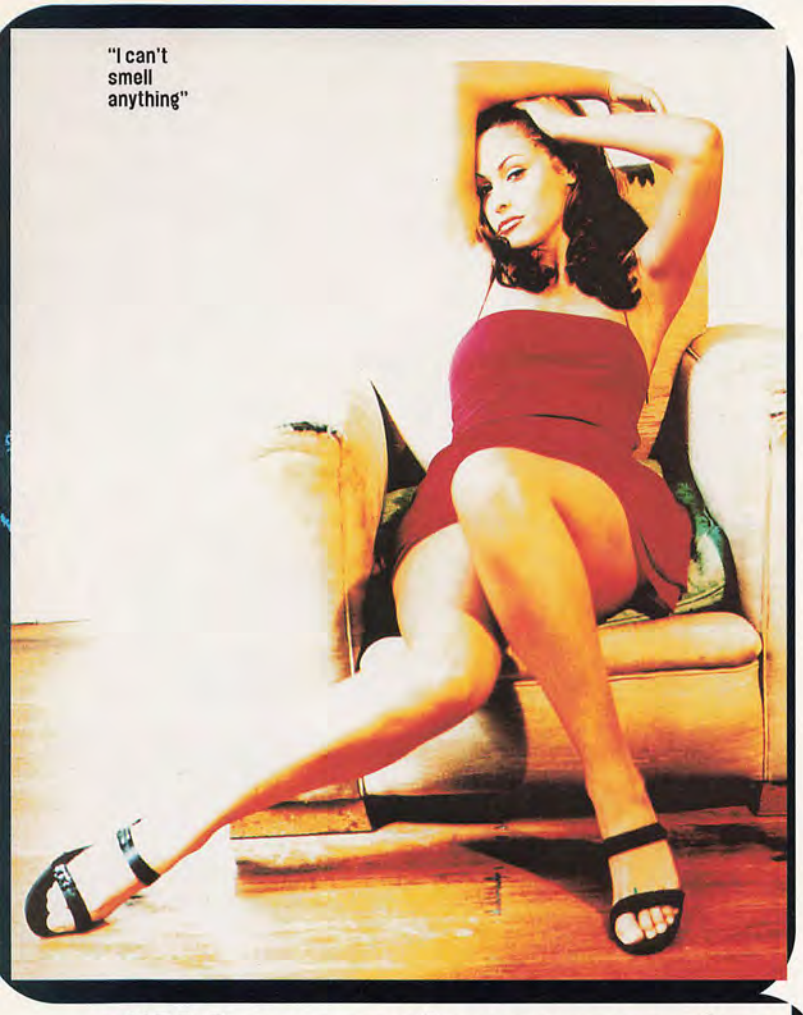
Is there any history of acting genius in your family?

"No, both my parents work in the pharmaceutical industry. I was always the artistic one in the family. I was also painting pictures in a Salvador Dali style, so I knew I'd do something different to them."

Do you still paint weird stuff then?

"Sometimes. I find it quite therapeutic. I tend to get my emotions out on paper and then destroy them."





"I can't smell anything"

"I blame my hormones for the marriage. They were all up the wall at the time"

That's a rubbish crime.

"I'm sorry. The shop was beginning to close and I had to get a card for my grandmother, so I was being pushed around in the traffic and just went through the lights. I got honked at."

Oh, you're looking at three years for something like that.

"Sorry, I don't have time to commit good crimes. I've been nicked in London for driving through red lights."

Why are you so against conforming to the rules of the Highway Code?

"I just hate being told by that light to stop."

Have you ever set fire to your jumper?

"No, have you?"

Yes. That's why I ask people if they have.

"Well, no, I haven't."

What about any self-inflicted damage to your clothing?

"Well I was on a school trip once and we were studying science or something. We were on a farm and I was looking round the back end of a cow and it shat itself. This green goo splattered all over me. I was wearing a white sweater and white pants as well. I wasn't happy on the coach home. Sat on my own if I remember."

About *these* pictures: do you feel sexy when you're practically naked?

"Well most of my shots have always been kind of raunchy stuff. I get typecast like that in photo shoots."

Doesn't that frustrate you?

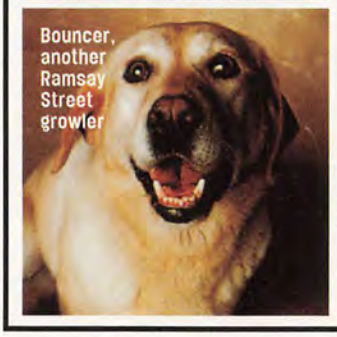
"No, I enjoy both. I did one shoot completely naked but I was more stressed about not wearing any make-up than about not wearing clothes. I really enjoy doing the girlie sexy stuff too and I don't think there's anything wrong with it." ✈

Itsy bitsy teeny weeny polka dot bikylie

Sheilas take a bow

The Australian soap opera industry has taken a hell of a long time to realise what makes a good show and what makes a bad one. For a while there it seemed so insistent on having fat, dull people traipsing around the outback that everyone's impression of Australia was a place full of fat dull people who just traipsed around. Which, of course, it isn't. The key to Aussie soap success was never in the outback, their hospitals or their prisons. Success was in the streets and on the beaches in the form of beautiful women.

Ferguson receives news of another Man Utd victory



Bouncer, another Ramsay Street growler

Of course it all went arse-eared when *Prisoner: Cell Block H* went on air in 1979. Big girls in dungarees looking as miserable as if they'd been sucking on a lemon with shit on it. Seemingly filmed in one of your relatives' front rooms, the sets were as classy as a Trust House Forte travel lodge. There were often heavy lesbian undertones, and with the sight of those women coming at you, they were welcome to all the rumpo they wanted. Catfights in the launderette was as raunchy as it got. And if they look like that in H Block, imagine what state the inmates of Cell Block K must be in. Oof!

The Aussies' position in the soap world improved no further with *Young Doctors* (which started life in 1976 but didn't hit Britain until the '80s), *Sons & Daughters* and *The Sullivans*. More collections of sorry-looking half-wits wittering on about some injured wallaby stuck in a pigging eucalyptus tree with a fridge up its arse. It was crap. And the unfortunate 3 million ✈

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SOAP SHEILAS (CONT)

or so unemployed who were basically forced to watch this tripe of a midweek afternoon were gradually having their brains turned into speed cabbages. With the introduction of *Neighbours* in the mid-'80s, it seemed like more of the same. Dull people with dire lives living on a shite street where animals made weird "sheruuuuuup" noises in the background. Absolute arse. Then, without any sort of fanfare, Kylie Minogue arrived. Messy blonde curls, ungamely looking chicken's face, a voice like a strangled shrimp in a filthy pair of dungarees. She was bloody gorgeous. Her character Charlene was an insipid fool, but it was Kylie's real life which entered folklore and put *Neighbours* on the map. BBC1

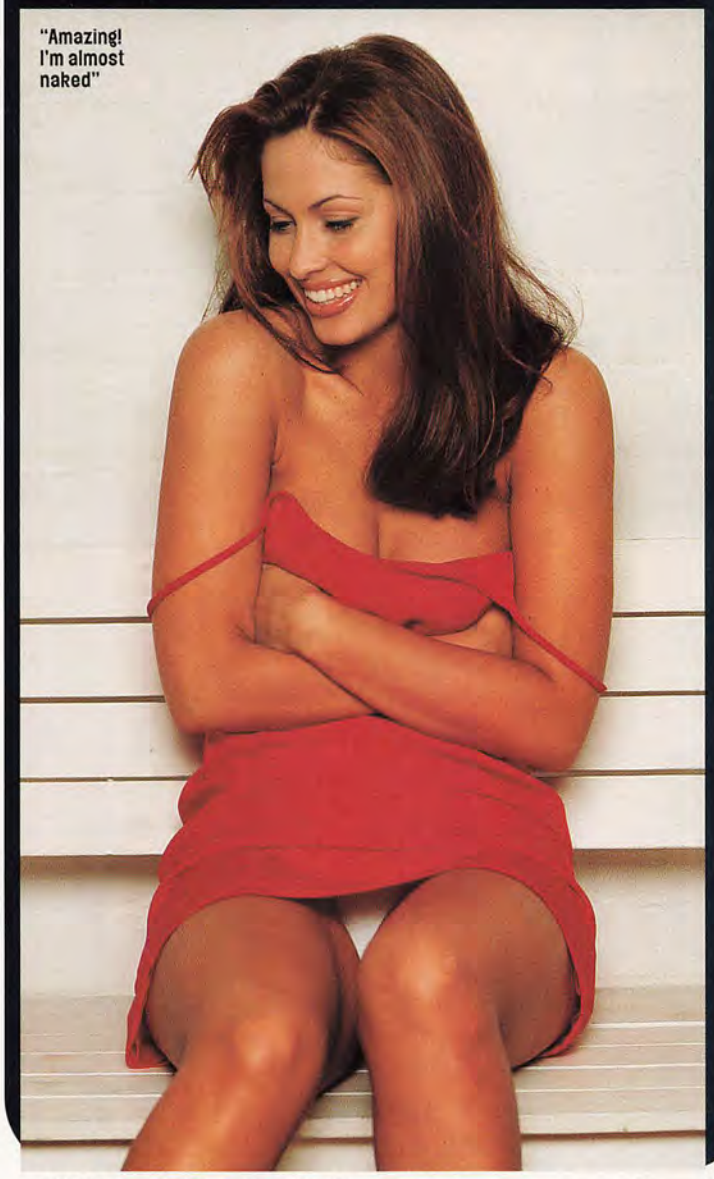
Dannii Minogue, yesterday

showed it twice a day, five days a week and 19 million people tuned in.

Then, after Kylie left to pursue a career as a rampantly sexual pop midget, the producers cottoned on and the girls turned up like buses. Plain Jane superbrain, Kerry the hippy, Bouncer the dog. You could put money on some scruffy oik with blonde hair turning up claiming to be the sister of someone who'd left the week before. By this time, *Home And Away* had arrived on ITV and put the same formula by a beach. It couldn't fail. Kylie's sister, Dannii, turned up as a fat-rumped goth who eventually cleaned up her act. Some people even fancied the short arse, Bobbi, who worked at the cafe. The viewing public were spoilt and couldn't decide which they liked best. Then, in the '90s, *Neighbours* ✈

Harrison's fjord

"No tide-marks here"


"Amazing! I'm almost naked"

"On *Neighbours*, we do tend to have a bit of a nipple problem"

You obviously feel confident with your body, though.

"Well, I like to think I'm pretty self-confident but I don't whip on the G-string and run down to the beach at any given moment."

Has Australian *Playboy* asked you to get your noiks out like they did with Emma Harrison?

"Yes, three times. I've nothing against *Playboy*, I think all the celebrities they've shot have looked wonderful, but it's not a direction I'd like to take. I'm all for men's magazines, but not quite at that level."

So do *Playboy* just keep upping their offer?

"Yeah, they do. The last one was quite phenomenal. I keep phoning my mum and saying, 'Can you believe someone would pay me this to take my clothes off?' But no, I'm still not tempted."

I read in one of the tabloids that you were asked to wear a bra during filming on *Neighbours* because your nipples were showing?

"That actually is true, which probably sounds surprising. The reason being, contrary to belief about here, it gets very cold in Melbourne, and therefore we do tend to have a bit of a nipple problem. It did take us about a year to work that out as far as I'm concerned."

So how did you fix that problem?

"I have my own lingerie line now, which is helping. It's only out here ✈

Nicola's still at the oral stage

SOAP SHEILAS (CONT)

Looks like a spot of dandruff

played its trump card – Kylie Mark II. Kimberley Davies: big, blonde and fancy with lips you could house a family of rodents on. *Neighbours* had its final piece of the jigsaw – glamour. Now the formula changed again and the class of lady improved immensely. Beautiful women would appear from nowhere requesting shitty work in the coffee shop for bog all money. How could it fail?

Between them, the two big soaps came up with Emma Harrison, Isla Fisher, Melissa George, Natalie Imbruglia, the Blakeney twins, that woman who plays Madge, Bouncer the dog, and don't forget Nicola Charles. Except she's English, which makes everything so much better. Yes indeed, Australia has finally pulled its finger from its arse and now provides some of the best telly in the world. From fat women with facial hair problems to full-lipped minxes in short skirts. If only I was unemployed again [*No problem – ed*]. Cheers.

THE LOAFER

Mum and dad wondered where their tablecloth had gone

Natalie Imbruglia – a musician, apparently

Australian-style scaffolding

"Guys have to stick their hands in and have a good feel around"

in Australia though. I'm contracted with the lingerie company for another two years. I get to design them and choose designs and stuff."

Apparently blokes buy the wrong underwear as presents for girls, so seeing as you can choose your own, what did you go for?

"Well, I don't mind the small, sexy, lacy-type underwear, but I much prefer if it's plainer. But the G-strings and stuff like that are very sexy. That's fine for guys to buy that sort of stuff. But what they have to do is stick their hand in and have a feel around. What we want is for them not only to look sexy but be comfortable, and that's what guys forget all about."

What about blokes wearing G-strings, does that steam your onions?

"God no! I don't find that attractive at all."

What's your favourite part of a bloke's body?

"Well, my boyfriend has this little blond stubbly goatee thing on his chin. I like that. I like to chew on it. Our cat tries to chew on it as well."

Have you ever seen yourself on the Internet?

"No, I've had heaps of mail from people asking for pictures. But I know nothing about computers. I don't know how pictures of me get onto the Internet. It's very flattering, I guess, hopefully it's legal stuff."

Who would you like to see starkers on the Internet?

"The person I most want to see nude I see nude every night when we get into bed. I wouldn't be surfing the web looking for naked people anyway. I don't think a 2D photo would do that much for me."

Yeah, it'll be much better when we can get huge 3D images of nude people on our screens…

"Errrrr."

I think I'll let you get off for your meal now.

"Oh, OK. I'll be over in England for Christmas, so me on the cover of **loaded** will be the first thing I'll see at Heathrow. That's scary, isn't it?"

Oh, you'll love it. ◼

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christ

a mission from

Nuns, coffee and the stairway to heaven, and that's just the tip of the Christberg

AS MISSIONS GO, THIS ONE STANK LIKE A FISH IN A GYPSY'S HAT. NOW SOME MEN quest for silver and some men quest for gold. Some demented folk fritter away their lives chasing the Ark of the Covenant or the Holy Grail, others risk the curse of agonizing death to be first into the tombs of the ancient Egyptian gods. Fools, the lot of them. A crack **loaded** investigation team needs bigger fish to fry. When we go looking for something, it has to be big. The biggest. So big we can't carry it home… An elephant? No, bigger! God! No, now you've gone too big. "Christ's foreskin!" says the assistant ed. "Met this bloke in a nightclub who reckons he knows where it is, Italy or something." "I like it!" says the editor. "Dead Christmassy. Technically small but metaphorically enormous. Christ's cock, it is. Here's 200 quid. You, you and this bloke Mike met in a nightclub – you've got four days, don't come back till you've found it."

"Anyone speak Italian?" "I can order a cappuccino." "We're off!" ✈

story by MICK BUNNAGE photos by GEOFF WAUGH mission expert MITCHELL KNIGHT

ROME, FRIDAY: TOUCHDOWN ROMA – A CITY on the move. Quite literally. Streets you drive up one minute aren't there when you try to drive back down them 10 minutes later. It's mad. The maps are full of lies. Going 200 yards from your hotel to the nearest fag shop can take up to 30 minutes, forced by a vicious one-way system and insane mob-motoring to detour round half the city to end up back where you started. Get out of the car and you risk getting run down by a scooter hoofing it along the pavement at 50 mph. On the plus side, the weather's excellent.

Now, where do you go to start looking for a 2,000-year-old foreskin that has, over the centuries, gone missing more times than Alex Higgins? Right to the top, of course. Religion Central. The Pope's house.

We bowl up to the Vatican. Massive place. The forecourt alone is the size of Wembley stadium. There's metal fences everywhere, like the aftermath of some weird holy donkey derby. "It looks like the set of *Junior Kickstart* with Peter Purves," says snapper Geoff. Nuns all over the place, all about three foot high. Must be the rules or something. "Right," I say to Mitch, our tour guide and historical expert, "where to now?" "Beats me," he says. "I've never been out of England before. Suppose we should have brought a map or something. I think it's St John's we're after. They've got the Holy Staircase and they used to have the Holy Foreskin." "Right! Ask that bloke over there dressed like a clown."

"That's one of the Pope's elite Swiss Guards," says Geoff, "one of the hardest military units on God's earth."

"Looks like a clown to me. Have a word, Mitch." Mitch strolls back 10 minutes later. "Couldn't understand a word. I think it's back near our hotel." "What's in this place, then?" I ask. "Nothing," says Mitch. "Nothing? Look at the size of it! They must have something…"

We wander into St Peter's. It's at the top of the steps, so we figure it must be the HQ. Straight off, I realise Mitch was right. There's nothing here but statues, gold pillars and a huge overhead dome with paintings all over it. "Haven't they got any relics?" I wonder. "Might have something down in the crypt," says Mitch. Geoff's following a party of Dutch college girls and manages to trap a few over by a confession box. They give him the slip while he's reloading his camera. We file down through the crypt, elbowing old people in wheelchairs out of the way, past the shrine to the Black Madonna, and end up in the gift shop. Some nuns are selling snow-shakers of Pope JP II. "Can I take your picture?" says Geoff to one of the counter nuns. "Nice one, wahey! They love it," he adds. "Er… don't think you should say 'wahey' to nuns, Geoff," I say. "It doesn't sound right at all."

Into the Sistine chapel (loads of people looking up), past more old statues and holy trinkets in glass cases. Just as we're about to give up, we stumble across a huge case displaying ampoules of the blood of

Liberace's Teasmaid

"How do you say, 'Where is Christ's cock' in Italian?"

some unnamed holy man and the fingernails of Pope Pascalle I (AD817-824). Mitch gets really excited. "We're definitely getting warm here," I say. "Bag it, Geoff. Let's get some coffee."

Within minutes we're back not 200 yards from our hotel, knocking on the door to some side room in what we think is the Sancta Sanctorum in the church of St John in the Lateran, the joint where the holy foreskin was kept till it went missing after the sacking of Rome in 1527. "Scuzee, scuzee Father," Mitch has mastered the Italian already and is backing it up with a hands-clasped-in-prayer technique to illustrate sincerity, a nice touch. "Scuzee Father, er, Holy Stairs? Er… walk up?" He makes a motion like a Trumpton soldier climbing a ladder. The priest looks at him entranced like he's watching some bizarre outburst of street theatre. A small crowd forms around him. "Aha!" says one of the priests. "You want for the Scala Sancta? You are Deutsch? Over there." He points across the square. "Inglesi!" "Yes! Well done!" "Bon appetit!" he says, patting Mitch on the head.

It looks promising. The Santa Sanctorum chapel was once reputedly the sacred depository for the heads of St Peter and St Paul, the Ark of the Covenant, The Holy Placenta, Christ's umbilical chord and, of course, the Holy Foreskin. Like a sort of holy lock-up, I suppose. What they've got now is the Holy Staircase, impressive enough in itself – 28 marble steps worn smooth after a thousand years of being crawled up by the faithful. The idea here is to climb the entire flight on your knees, head bowed in reverence. Legend has it that the staircase itself was transported from the palace of Pontius Pilate and was the one climbed by Jesus on the day of his condemnation. At the top of the stairs, in a massive silver casing, is a painting of Christ on a throne believed to have been started by St Luke and finished by angels, then flown over to Rome by a miracle. "Looks like a long way up there," says Geoff and wanders off. "Treo cappuccino," orders Geoff as we take a seat outside at the nearest café. In spite of the boiling sun, we're all wearing anoraks and carrying the same plastic bags we had when we got off the plane. It would be impossible to tell just by looking at us that we're on a mission to find the holiest of all Christian relics. We are berks, mapless in the land of the chic. "Perhaps I'll meet a good woman," muses Mitch. "That's all you're likely to get round here," says Geoff.

They don't look much like nuns to me

SATURDAY: BACK TO ST JOHN'S, WHERE IT TURNS out they had a lump from the table of the last supper locked away in a side room. The only catch is that there's a full-on service taking place now with priests, incense, and The Swingle Singers doing the hymns. We bottle it and flee.

No more than 20 minutes away, we thunder into the Santa Croce church. It's completely deserted, with what looks like its own off-licence flogging alcoholic beverages prepared by Cistercian monks. "Father," says Mitch, approaching some bloke in a robe stacking a pile of chairs. "We come to see the nails and the holy sponge, the relics. I'm a student from Canterbury. Here's my library card." The feller studies it for a while then disappears into another room. "Follow me," he says. We go down some steps then he turns the keys in two huge oak doors. Inside it's cold and statues rest up against the walls. There's scaffolding holding the place up and two workmen are silently painting the ceiling. One of them's got a fag on. "Over there," indicates the holy man. We can't believe it. In a huge glass case up one end of this little chapel, this is what they've got stashed: 1) the nails that went through Jesus' hands; 2) the sponge that was used to offer him wine; 3) the actual sign that was nailed to the cross above his head proclaiming him Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews; 4) two actual thorns from the crown of thorns hastily banged together for him to wear on the cross; 5) three large pieces from the actual true cross; 6) a rock from the Bethlehem stable where he was born; 7) the index finger of St Thomas the Apostle; 8) a bit of the cross from the crucified good thief St Dismas. We can't believe it. It's like Planet Hollywood for Christians. I mean, this is it. Like finding the acetate to the *White Album* in your granny's shed.

The foreskin is potentially the most important article in history. The Holy Grail of Christ's flesh

The getaway vehicle took some prangs

"You may take only one picture," says the father. Geoff is shaking. It's a big shot ✈

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A stairway to Heaven

Day three, and not a whiff of foreskin

HISTORICAL BIT

According to James Bentley's book, *Restless Bones*, Jesus's foreskin, removed at birth and placed in a jar of oil by his mother, was passed down till it reached Emperor Charlemagne, who presented it to Pope Leo III. It was lost during the sacking of Rome in 1527, and was discovered years later by a virgin, who reported it as a bright red lump of flesh with an overwhelmingly sweet odour. "That's our boy," said the church, who had it installed at Calcata, all hush-hush. Several other foreskins turned up in the meantime; by 1900 there were 13 of them. By now, the Vatican were so embarrassed by the existence of such an irreverent relic that the Pope had Calcata removed from all maps and declared any further talk on the subject punishable by excommunication. Still, so powerful was this relic that merely to visit it meant remission from sin for 10 years. In 1983 it was pinched. People in the town, mostly hippies and anarchists, believe it was stolen by the church, who couldn't bear the thought of such a precious item being left among heathens or dodgy alternative types. Some claim it was pinched by Satanists or Nazis. A bloke in the café in Calcata reckoned it was sold to a millionaire French rock star. Then he remembered there weren't any.

"Get your blood of Christ, here"

If the foreskin was genuine, the implications would be enormous. It would contain Christ's DNA

alright. The entire gubbins and only one go at it. "Thank you very much," says Mitch to the brother, and we turn to walk away, unable to believe what we've just seen. Geoff's going, "Did the flash go off? Tell me it did."

As we stagger off, beaming to ourselves, the workmen start chatting to the priest. Then they all start laughing.

THE HOLY FORESKIN, MONDAY: A FAIR assortment of relics in the bag, it's time to leave Rome for the most important leg of our quest – Calcata, two hours' drive north and the last known site of the sacred foreskin, according to the only guide book that's ever made reference to it, James Bentley's *Restless Bones*.

We approach the remote medieval town of Calcata with the anticipation of a bunch of kids who think they've found out where Father Christmas lives, and know that means they'll get first pick of the bikes. The foreskin was last seen here in 1983. Locals used to parade it round the alleys at the annual feast of the circumcision every New Year's Day.

Now the whole point about the Holy Foreskin, or prepuce, is that it is the only existing piece of Christ's flesh still on the planet. The Turin Shroud, once the holiest of relics, was, after all, just a dodgy old dirty cloth with a face on it and a few blood stains. The foreskin is actual flesh. If it is genuine, and there's no way of testing, the implications are enormous. For a start, it would contain Christ's DNA. In theory, Christ's entire penis could be regrown in a lab and cultivated on the head of a mouse like that human ear. Some believe there is a race of people directly descended from Christ's bloodline who still operate secretly throughout the world. If the boffins got their hands on the foreskin there could be a whole army of bearded blokes in sandals wandering about turning water into wine, predicting lottery numbers and doing all manner of miracles. It'd be a right old laugh.

Accessible only by a narrow winding road, the town entrance is patrolled by two goats and a donkey. As we stroll through the ancient tunnelled gateway, a fat bloke balancing a tray of sandwiches walks past us whistling. "Alright lads," he goes. "Wahey! Nice day innit?" Weird. As we turn the corner to the tiny market square, we're met with a full-on camera crew complete with 40 extras, trained dogs and people with headphones on, shouting at each other. "Fuck it, it's the cops! Leggit!" shouts Mitch. Immediately to our right, sitting on a deckchair outside the church is lantern-jawed Scots rocker Richard bloody Jobson eating a banana. I look at Geoff. Geoff looks at me. What trickery is this?! A sick man's dream?! Has Jobson nabbed the foreskin?? Has he invited the world's press to witness his demonstration of its legendary Sex Power? Surely to God! Is Beadle about, also?

No. But it's nearly as bad. It seems top movie director Mike '*Leaving Las Vegas*' Figgis and his crew have chosen today of all days to set up camp in the middle of an obscure Italian mountain village. OUR obscure Italian mountain village! And look, Jobson himself is seated bang in front of the door to the sacred church wherein we should find the remains of the relic that has been our ✈

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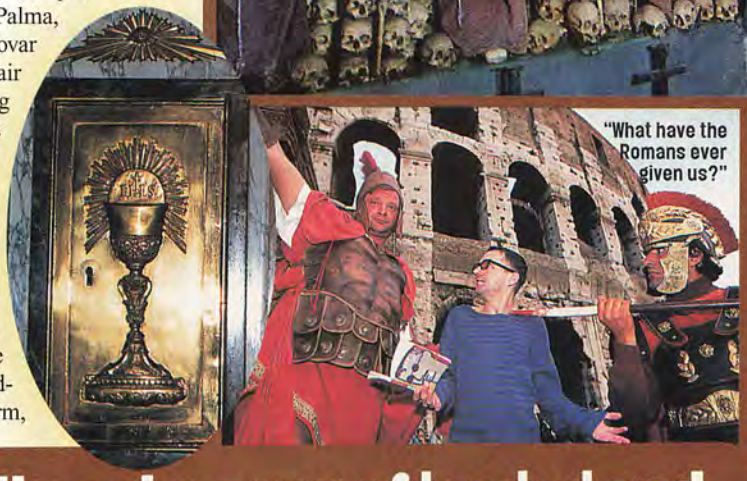
four-day quest. Bollocks! Big Time bollocks!

"Let us through immediately," I say to a bloke eating a sandwich. "We're from **loaded** magazine. We seek the holy…" Geoff thumps my arm. "Don't tell him," he says. "Christ," says the bloke, "what are you lot doing here? I thought you were only interested in tits. I doubt if any of this lot'll take their tops off. Richard Jobson's over there, he's doing a thing for Sky."

Jobson is pretending not to stare at us menacingly, which, bearing in mind the unfortunate set of his features, is almost impossible. It's like *High Noon* or something. They've got the whole town sewn up with guards at every alley going, "Quiet please. Rolling."

We decide to take positive action. During a lull in the filming, Geoff sidles up to Spanish actress Rossy Di Palma, star of many an Almodovar film, who's sitting in a chair made out of rock minding her own business, and starts chatting her up in Spanish. She smiles, then Mitch nips over like a little dog and tries to climb up on her knee. As Geoff starts snapping pictures, the whole place goes wild. Jobson's on his feet, huge jaw swaying like a lathered-up bosun on a ship in a storm,

A dead end



"What have the Romans ever given us?"

Mitch pulls out a copy of loaded and starts waving it about. Big mistake. The whole gang are on him

while his two mates, wielding hi-tech video gear, wade in muscling up to little Mitch. Di Palma's personal bodyguard leaps to her aid, shooing Mitch away with a bottle of mineral water. Naturally, I duck behind a large rock and observe the disgraceful scene from a suitably safe journalistic position. Mitch is hopping up and down like a little orphan child who's been nabbed pinching apples off a market stall. Jobson towers above him, blocking out the light.

Then Mitch pulls out a copy of **loaded** and starts waving it about. Big mistake. The whole gang are on him. The crew, the locals, the dog-handlers. It's mental. Dogs barking. Figgis is struggling to concentrate on lining up the next shot. Mitch, pumped to full height, looks like he's going to headbutt Jobson in the groin. Some people are laughing. Geoff walks off, one arm in the air, and starts singing 'Into The Valley', doing a bit of that funny kicking dance. Oh dear me. That certainly all went a bit wrong.

Back to the mission. When things cool off we ask around town, hoping someone will talk about the holy prepuce. "Oh yes," says some hippy fella over by the snack bar. "It was here.

Jesus, it's the Mary chain

The Pope took it. Talk to Caterine. She knows." We find Caterine's house and knock on her door. "We've come to talk to you about the holy prepuce," says Mitch very slowly. "Ah yes," she replies. "Come in, come in. You are knights on the quest?" "Yes!" says Mitch, all excited again. "That's my name, Knight, Mitchell Knight!" She smiles. "And I'm Sir Galahad," says Geoff, saluting. "Ah, Sir Galahad," says Caterine, pointing to an ancient-looking painting of the knights of the round table, with a chair empty waiting for Galahad. Above the chair is an inscription in Latin. "Here," she says, pulling out from behind her kitchen table a parchment bearing an identical inscription. It looks ancient. Bloody hell, it's the one from the painting! How did she get that? She points at Geoff and smiles, "Now, Sir Galahad, sit." A black cat leaps from a rafter and lands on Geoff's shoulder. "Jesus Christ!" he says.

Caterine leads us into her study stacked with books on mad, God-related stuff, dusty old paintings and bizarre old Gothicky relics. There's a six-foot jewelled silver staff propping up a bookcase. She's wearing all black and the place is alive with black cats. Mitch kneels before her and asks her to tell us all about the Jesus foreskin. She shows us a huge photo of the elaborate carved silver pot it used to sit in. "For me," she says, "this is the Holy Grail." Then she talks to us in broken English for about four hours, with the aid of three interpreters hastily convened from the local bar. She saw the prepuce herself once when she opened the pot in the church, and she was in the village when it was stolen. It looked like a big red bean with a ridge through the middle. "It is potentially the most important article in history. The actual Holy Grail of Christ's flesh. Sought after by all the powers of good and evil on earth," says the interpreter, rolling a fag nonchalantly.

As it got darker, I started to get the feeling that if we don't get out soon, we'd probably end up in a big pie or something. They were nice people but we made our excuses and hoofed it out into the night. Not the sort of thing proper knights would have done at all, really. Oh well.

Still, we knew in our hearts we'd got as close as we could to getting our hands on the sacred bell-end… pulling off the big one, so to speak. Perhaps changing the course of history forever. What a scoop for a bunch of berks from Essex. We were elated. On the way home we agreed that, given the opportunity, we would have used it to make the world a better place for everyone. Even Jobson. Probably. Happy Christmas. ■

WHAT YOU WAITING FOR... CHRISTMAS?

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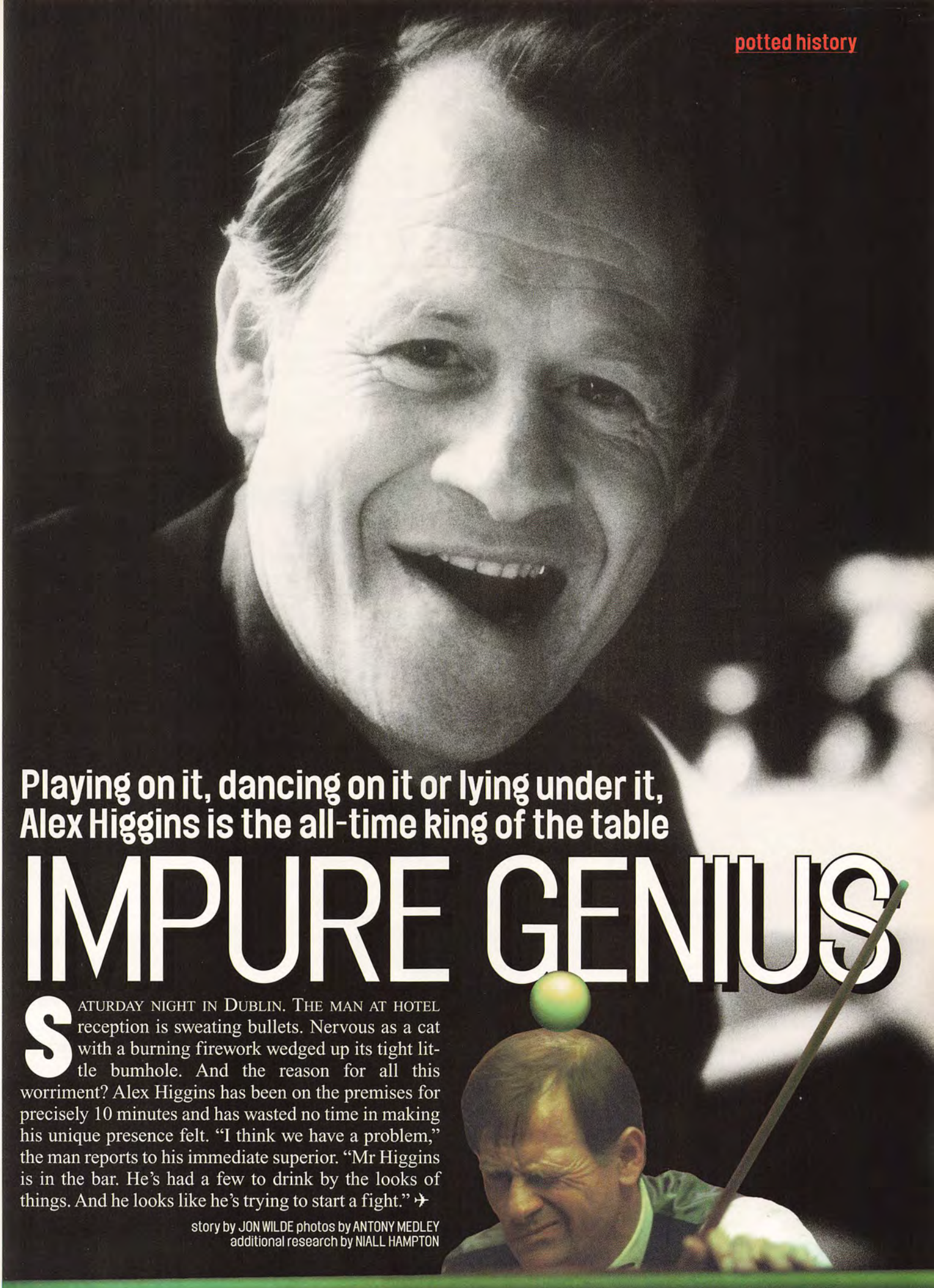
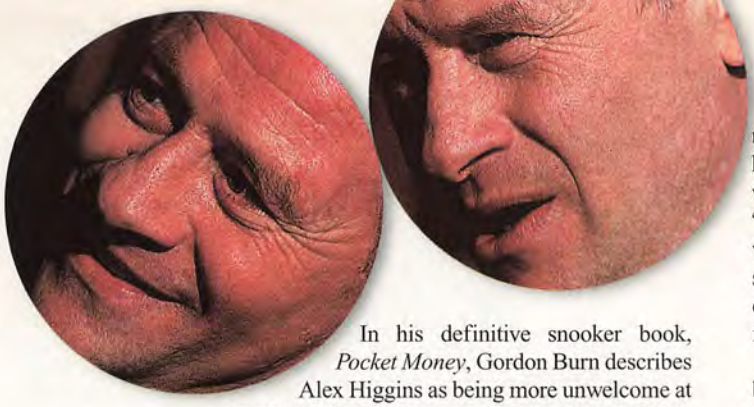


Playing on it, dancing on it or lying under it, Alex Higgins is the all-time king of the table

IMPURE GENIUS

SATURDAY NIGHT IN DUBLIN. THE MAN AT HOTEL reception is sweating bullets. Nervous as a cat with a burning firework wedged up its tight little bumhole. And the reason for all this worriment? Alex Higgins has been on the premises for precisely 10 minutes and has wasted no time in making his unique presence felt. "I think we have a problem," the man reports to his immediate superior. "Mr Higgins is in the bar. He's had a few to drink by the looks of things. And he looks like he's trying to start a fight." ✈

story by JON WILDE photos by ANTONY MEDLEY
additional research by NIALL HAMPTON



In his definitive snooker book, *Pocket Money*, Gordon Burn describes Alex Higgins as being more unwelcome at more hotels in every part of the globe than any other person in Britain. Some claim to fame that. And, if it were completely true, it wouldn't be altogether surprising. Given Higgins' reputation for causing a rats' nest of trouble wherever he roams. And it's a proper old rats' nest he's stirring up this particular evening. According to the hotel manager, the man universally known as The Hurricane has been banned from this posh Dublin establishment on three previous occasions. "I'm not sure how Mr Higgins managed to book himself in this time," he muses. "But I've got a feeling that we're going to live to regret it."

A pretty safe bet that one. Especially when you consider that, at this precise moment, The Hurricane is performing a peculiar sort of war dance on top of a table slap bang in the middle of the crowded hotel foyer – cheered on by a group of leather-lunged old ladies down for the day from Donegal. "That's Alex, that is," says one to a bemused-looking passer-by. "He's the Peoples Champion, he is." Then, at the top of her voice, "Go on Alex, get your knob out for the girls! I bet you're hung like a frigging bull!"

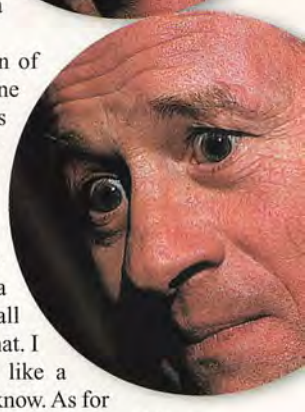
Oh Lordy. A proper old carry-on, so it is. And the hotel management are taking every available precaution to put the lid on it before it all carries on just a little bit too far. Two burly security guards are posted outside Higgins' hotel room, ready to pounce should he decide, on some mad whim, to smash up the furniture or, in time-honoured rock'n'roll fashion, opt to send a television set crashing in the direction of the hotel car park. Another half-dozen uniformed types of brick shithouse build have been instructed to follow him around and act decisively should all hell suddenly be let loose.

"Alex is a little, ahem, highly strung tonight," explains his one-armed manager, Tommy, observing proceedings with the kind of expression that can only be described as extremely long-suffering. "It's probably not the best time to collar him for an interview. Best leave it for the morning, yeah?"

"My life... I haven't really had much to do with it"

SUNDAY LUNCH-TIME. ALEX HIGGINS is seated at a table in a Chinese restaurant in Dublin city centre. He appears to have calmed down a wee bit from the previous night – but gives every indication that he's an explosion just biding its time and waiting for the right moment to go off. "Listen chum," he says to the young waiter who's a tad behind schedule with the steamed prawn dumplings. "You were obviously born about three weeks ago. Now get a fucking move on, you little prick."

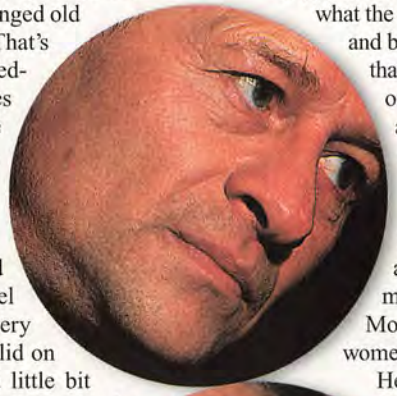
Charmed, I'm sure. He gives every impression of being a man in a hurry, does Alex Hurricane Higgins. An impatient man. Impatient for his Chinese grub. Impatient for this. Impatient for that. Impatient for everything. Impatient to live. Always has been. Always will be.



"I'm impatient," he explains in his typically slurred way, "because I've spent most of my life being chased. That's chased, not chaste. I'm a hunted man. That's hunted, not haunted. They call me a tormented genius. But I don't know about that. I don't call myself a genius. Sometimes I play like a genius. Sometimes I act like a genius. That's all I know. As for tormented… Well, c'mon, we're all fucking tormented, aren't we? Every last one of us. Life was never meant to be one smooth path. It certainly hasn't been a smooth path for me.

"I love snooker more than anything in life. More

I've had my ups and I've had my downs. I have many sweet dreams. Lots of happy moments. Generally, I look for the good things in life. But I know what the bad things are too, 'cos I've experienced them myself. Good and bad – I've had my share of both. I think it would be fair to say that I've lived a bit. From the time I started potting balls at the age of nine, I knew it wasn't going to be a normal, boring life. 'Cos as soon as I started potting balls, I realised that I was completely addicted to it."



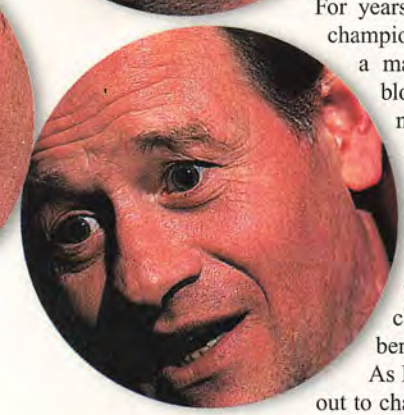
And so it remains.

"My life is fucking snooker, for Christsakes! I'm attached to a snooker cue. That's how it's always been. Snooker is all-consuming for me. It's my life. It's also my hobby. I love it. More than anything in life. Even more than women, for fuck's sake."

He grew up in Belfast, spending most of his youth hustling at a local billiard hall called The Jampot. "I lived on a diet of Coca-Cola, Mars Bars and Woodbines," he once said. "I couldn't be arsed to worry about proper food. All I cared about was snooker. I would wake up in the middle of the night and just think about this shot and that shot. I'd think about the same shot maybe 400 times. I was like fucking obsessed."

He left school at 15 and skidaddled to England. He worked for a while as a stableboy in Berkshire ("until I got fed up with getting up at five every morning to shovel shit") and then briefly trained as a jockey, before deciding to have a crack at making a living out of snooker. At 17, he came out of nowhere and waltzed off with both the Northern Ireland and All Ireland Amateur Championships. "This is just the start," he told reporters at

the time. "I'm going all the way to the top in this game. Ain't nothing or nobody gonna stop me." True to his word, he entered the 1972 World Championship and trounced all comers, beating reigning champ John Spencer in a nail-bitingly dramatic final. "Could snooker ever be the same again?" wondered *The Guardian*. In a pig's arse it could.



For years, snooker had been crying out for a champion able to help transform the game from a marginal indoor recreation into a full-blown sporting spectacle. Higgins was that man. Overnight, he changed the image of snooker beyond recognition. As one pundit observed, "He did for the snooker table what Jerry Lee Lewis did for the piano – taking an instrument delicately crafted to the requirements of the genteel classes, and annexing it to his own berserk, low-life agenda."

As Higgins recalls, it wasn't like he set out to change anything. It just happened. And he went along with it.

"You have to remember," he says, "that snooker was bollocks before I came along. Complete bollocks. There was nothing to inspire. You had Joe Davis.

than women, for fk's sake"**

He was champion for 20 fucking years. No one else got a look in. Then I arrived. I introduced a new way of playing. I gave the people something to remember. I had the ability to take their breath away. Which is what I did again and again."

And how. When Higgins was in full-flight, which was most of the time through the '70s and early '80s, he made for a magnificent spectacle. There was always a sense of menace about him, an air of pregnant danger. An outrageous talent, he played with an irrepressible swagger and a quickfire strut. He once claimed that he developed his manic, quick-on-the-trigger style from dodging the blows of a local bully at The Jampot, and from having to run like the clappers when he lost a money match and had no ready funds to settle his debts. Whatever. He played with furious intensity and potted balls from every conceivable angle. Like all those possessed by genius, he made the impossible look ridiculously easy. Obvious, even. At his very best, he gave the impression that he was playing for his very life. And the punters? They loved him for it. They went completely daffy for him. He was christened 'The People's Champion' and the tag stuck like shit to a blanket.

Like Georgie Best before him, it was as though Higgins was blessed with so much natural talent that he had ample energy left to burn and squander to the hilt. Which he did, at every available opportunity.

Becoming snooker's ✈

HURRICANE'S STORMS

1973: He receives the first in a long series of WPBSA fines, £100 for misconduct prior to and during the World Championship. He is also severely reprimanded by WPBSA for accusing Cliff Thorburn of taking little bags of white powder in order to enhance his performance.

1981: He is admitted to private hospital after admitting that his excessive lifestyle has taken its toll. "It's been a hard year," he tells reporters. "I'm fucked, basically."

1982: After winning the World Championship for a second time, he is hauled before the disciplinary committee and charged with urinating into a tableside flower display during a practice session. Attempting to curry favour, he wheels 12 bottles of vintage Champagne into the committee room. Unimpressed, they fine him a grand and issue a stern warning.

1985: After thrashing Steve Davis in the B&H Masters final, he turns to TV cameras and hollers, "You'd better believe it – I'm fucking back." He is arrested at his luxury Cheshire home after chucking a TV set through the window.

1986: At the UK Championships in Preston, he is ordered to undergo a drugs test. He responds to this request by head-butting the tournament director.

1987: Smashes up home after girlfriend returns and pours pot of cold tea over him to wake him up from drunken stupor.

1989: Neighbour observes Higgins plunge past her living-room window, head first. Observes a police spokesman: "Mr Higgins is not seriously hurt. He landed on his head."

1990: During snooker World Cup, he threatens to have fellow professional Dennis Taylor shot the next time he dares to venture into Northern Ireland. After which, he is banned for a year and has all his ranking points removed. Punches press officer Colin Randle in stomach after Randle thanks him for turning up for press conference.

1992: Following a game, he is involved in a verbal altercation with Stephen Hendry. Having lost the match fair and square, Higgins claims he approached Hendry and remarked, "Well played Stephen, old chap. Though, if you don't mind me saying, you were a tad lucky in that last game." According to Hendry, Higgins marched up to him and said, "Up your arse, you fucking cunt!"

1994: After falling over a pub wall, he cuts his arm badly and is forced to play qualifying match with blood dripping from his makeshift bandage – an old Manchester Utd scarf.

1997: He attacks *Daily Star* reporter with a shopping trolley. He is involved in a fracas at a hotel in the Manchester suburb of Gatley. Abuses guests and refuses to leave. Threatens to have two policewomen shot and, when arrested, jumps on his bed, crying: "I'm a British spy – you can't do this to me." Police officer replies, "Oh yes we can," and promptly hauls him off to the cells.

ultimate bad boy, its resident hellraiser. Down the years, his gonzo antics would ensure that his name dominated tabloid front pages as regularly as his sporting exploits grabbed the back page headlines. There was never a dull moment when Higgins was around. He urinated into a flower pot at Sheffield's Crucible Theatre. He attempted to direct traffic in a built-up area of Manchester during rush hour. He verbally abused referees and, on one occasion, headbutted a tournament director. Out on a drinking spree with his old mate, Ollie Reed, he downed half a pint of Giorgio Armani perfume in one. All just for the sheer bloody hell of it.

Throughout his career, his relationship with the WPBSA, snooker's governing body, has been, to say the least, somewhat strained. He has been summoned to more disciplinary hearings than all of his fellow professionals put together – coughing up more than £30,000 in fines. Unrepentant, he describes the WPBSA as "the locusts of the earth".

Try to suggest to Higgins that he has brought perhaps just a few of his troubles upon himself, and you get bloody short shrift.

"Upon myself?" he booms, banging his chopsticks on the restaurant table for emphasis. "Fucking bollocks! Look, you've done a little bit of research on me, haven't you? You've gotten to know your onions. I'm very partial to the silverskin variety, myself. What I'm trying to say is that you might have done your research on me, but have you done any research on these other cunts? Have you done your homework on any of the protagonists whose authority I'm supposed to have insulted over the years? I fucking doubt it. 'Cos, like the rest of 'em, you're scared… you open that cupboard door ever so slightly… and you might just get yourself fucking shot. Know what I mean?

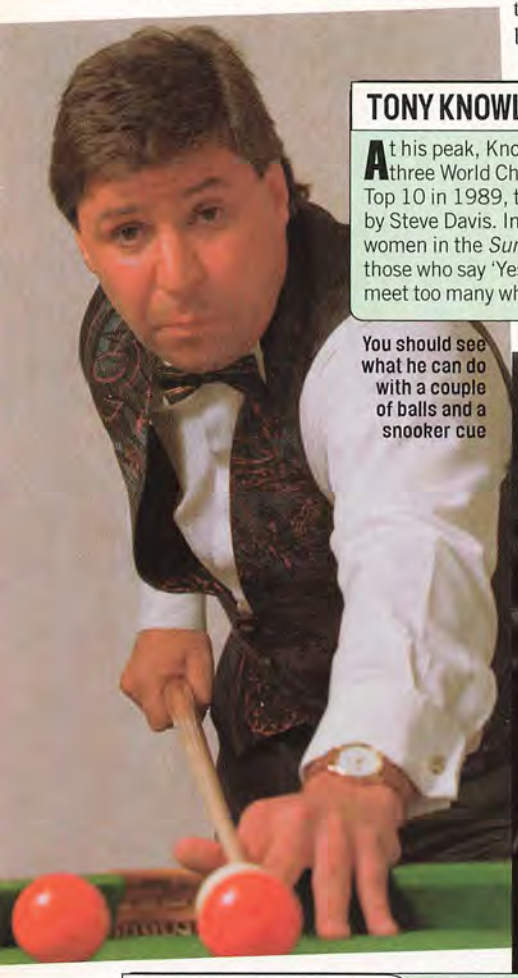
"Look, if I've got any fault, it's that I've told the truth too often for my own good. Everything

"Snooker was complete bollocks before I came along"

I've done in my life has been very open. I've never ever shirked. I remember being at school. My mate Norman would do things in the classroom that would make me laugh. I'd be brought to the front of the class and take 12 of the best on my hand. Real Billy Bunter stuff, y'know? Norm would look at me, the teacher would be knocking the shit out of my hand, and I'd be laughing my nuts off. It's just… fucking life. Know what I'm saying? Life. That's the way it's always been with me. Whether it was a good caning or whatever. If I deserved punishment, I'd take it. Even if the harshness of that punishment was completely unjustified. All I've ever done is try to put my best foot forward. I've just tried to be truthful. I play snooker the way I play it. I live life the way I live it."

And would he say that he's lived life the way he's played snooker? Would he say that snooker has served as a passable metaphor for his life?

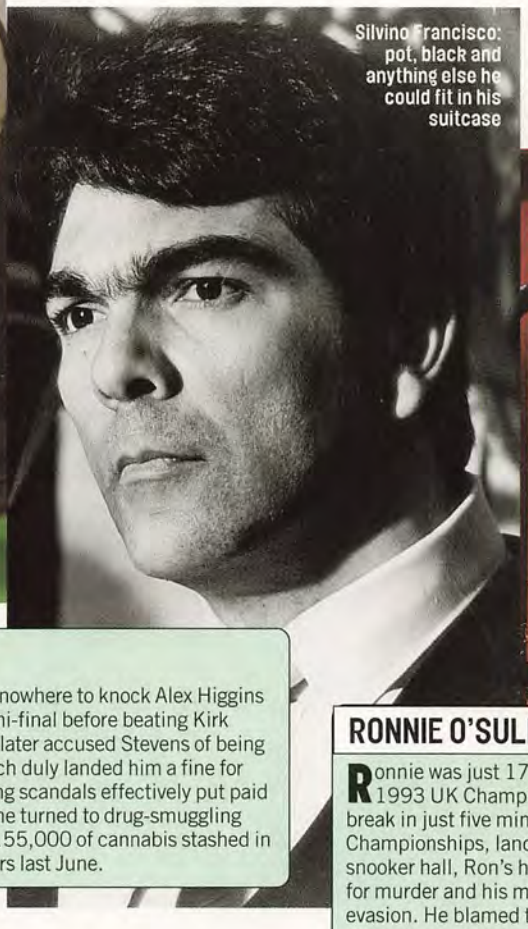
"Not really," he shrugs. "My life… I haven't really had much to do with it. All I've done is take part in it. Y'know, I've lived my life in the spotlight. That goes with the territory. I accept that. People pay good money to see me. I want to show them something ✈



You should see what he can do with a couple of balls and a snooker cue

TONY KNOWLES

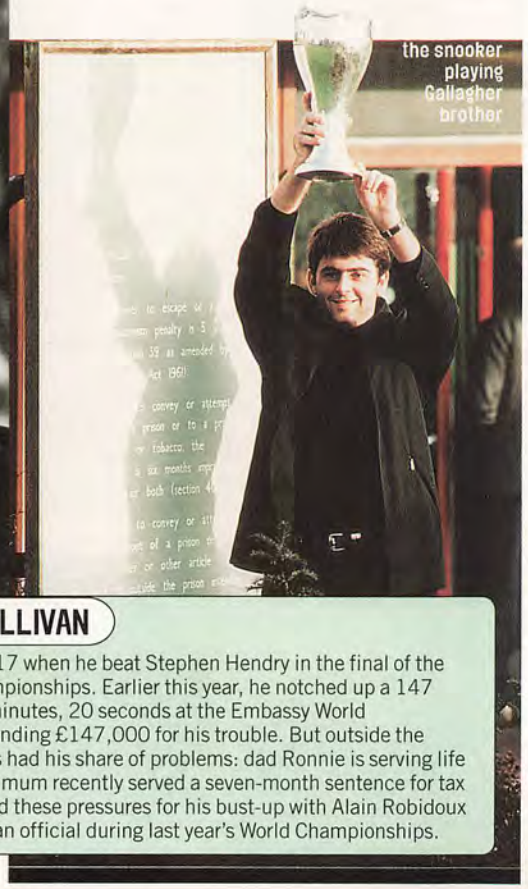
At his peak, Knowles was ranked second in the world and reached three World Championship semi-finals. He dropped out of the Top 10 in 1989, the year he smashed a glass door following a defeat by Steve Davis. In 1984, he revealed his way of weighing up the women in the *Sun*. "I don't rate girls out of 10, I rate them out of two: those who say 'Yes' and those who say 'No'," he boasted. "I don't meet too many who say 'No'."



Silvino Francisco: pot, black and anything else he could fit in his suitcase

SILVINO FRANCISCO

Reformed gambler Francisco came from nowhere to knock Alex Higgins out of the 1985 Dulux British Open semi-final before beating Kirk Stevens to win the title. The South African later accused Stevens of being "as high as a kite" during their match, which duly landed him a fine for professional misconduct. Two match-rigging scandals effectively put paid to his career. Declared bankrupt in 1996, he turned to drug-smuggling and was caught at the first attempt with £155,000 of cannabis stashed in his car at Dover. He was jailed for three years last June.



the snooker playing Gallagher brother

RONNIE O'SULLIVAN

Ronnie was just 17 when he beat Stephen Hendry in the final of the 1993 UK Championships. Earlier this year, he notched up a 147 break in just five minutes, 20 seconds at the Embassy World Championships, landing £147,000 for his trouble. But outside the snooker hall, Ron's had his share of problems: dad Ronnie is serving life for murder and his mum recently served a seven-month sentence for tax evasion. He blamed these pressures for his bust-up with Alain Robidoux and an assault on an official during last year's World Championships.

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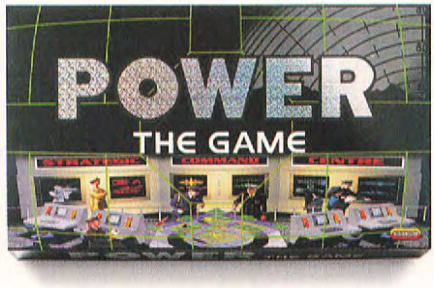


SPEAR'S GAMES®

they'll never forget. People can say what they like about me. I don't really care. Unless they're wrong. Then I'll tell them they're fucking wrong.

"Like they say, I've lived dangerously and played snooker dangerously. But I'm the best safety player there's ever been. I mean, Steve Davis can play a half-decent safety game. But I can play a watertight, fly-speck safety game. I am the fucking specialist. Nobody can read a table like me. Nobody. People who say I don't know about safety, they obviously know fuck all about snooker. Because, when it comes to safety, I am the daddy. I mean, we can all pot. Any stupid old cunt can pot. But you've got to make that white ball do things for you. You've got to keep it on a string. And that's what I've always been able to do. I can still do it. Don't let anybody tell you different. Given the right kind of preparation and an even playing surface, I can still hand out a thrashing to any player in the Top 16. I wouldn't be so presumptuous as to say that I'm going to win the next World Championship. All I'm saying is that I can still compete at the highest level. You could bet your house on it."

"So I told Uri, just give it a bit of this first"

KIRK STEVENS

Despite being, at 20, the youngest-ever semi-finalist at the time in the World Championships in 1980, Stevens never went on to reach a major final despite being ranked fifth in the world. Instead he will probably be best remembered for his white suits, straw boaters and a six-year coke habit which cost him £250,000. He was declared bankrupt in 1992 and was last heard of working behind the counter in the Toronto billiard hall he started hustling in as a teenager, admitting he'll never be cured of his addiction to coke and booze.

CLIFF THORBURN

Dubbed 'The Grinder' due to his intense concentration and tedious play, Thorburn took the world title in 1980. Other titles followed, but an "intractable fault" (hitting the cue ball left of centre) made him slide down the world rankings. Following Thorburn's positive test for cocaine during the 1988 British Open, his career went into a tailspin, and he subsequently faded away. Recently planned to open a snooker hall in his native Canada.

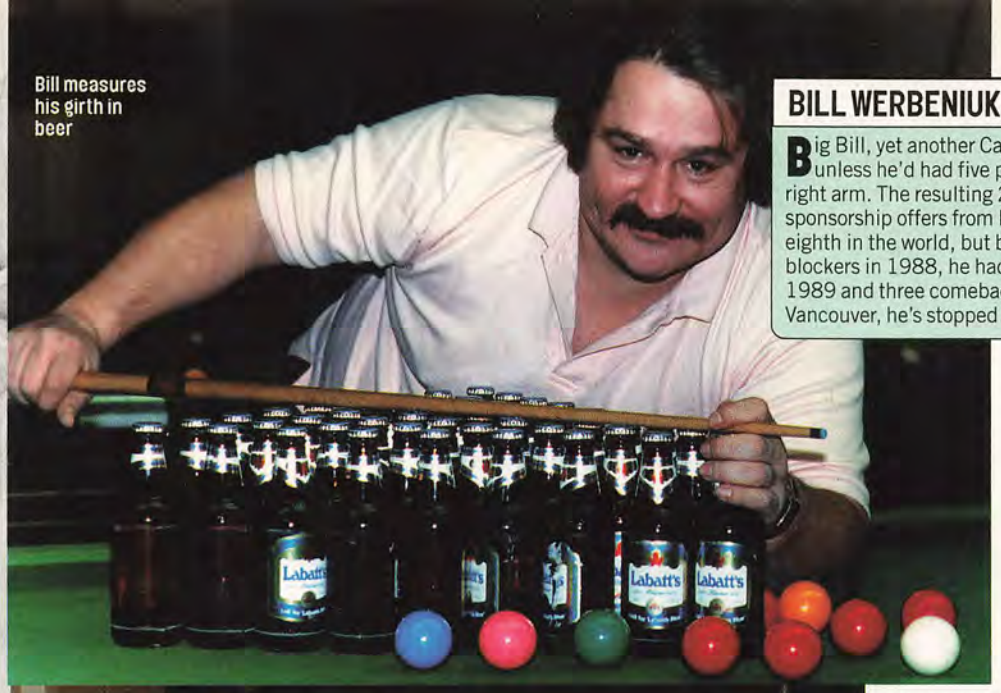
Cliff was also a stand-in for *Magnum PI*

You could. Though you'd have to be a fair bit loose in the bean to do so. Even at the peak of his game, Higgins was always too highly strung to be wholly consistent. But he won his fair share of honours: World Championships in '72 and '82, Benson & Hedges Masters in '78 and '81, Coral UK Championship in '83. Then, most recently, he raked in the pot at the Irish Masters in '89. Through the '90s, however, his game has been in a state of seemingly terminal decline. In 1990, after going out in the first round at the Crucible, he actually announced his intention to retire from snooker and become a professional golfer. He was soon back. But, since that time, he has attempted to negotiate an increasingly slippery slope. As his ranking has slipped further and further down the scale, he has been obliged to take part in qualifying matches for the World Championship: an altogether humiliating process which involves him taking on supposed no-hopers in draughty halls, watched by the proverbial one man and his dog. Even then, he has struggled to compete against butchers and market traders raising their game against a true 24-carat snooker legend.

"People talk about me like I'm all washed up, which is

Not that his problems have been confined to snooker. Outside the halls and theatres, his life has regularly come apart at the seams. Helped along by a personality that could safely be described as addictive. He's always had a sizeable weakness for the sauce, though he's likely to let you have it with both barrels if you dare suggest that he might qualify as an alcoholic. "I simply enjoy a drink," he'll snap. "I'm a drinking sort of person. That's all I am." At one time, he also developed a well-publicised coke habit and was known to line up the white on an alarmingly regular basis. According to at least one Sunday tabloid, he was at one time spending more than a grand a week on the stuff. At various times, he's also gone big on the gambling front; once blowing a cool 13 grand in a single afternoon at Wolverhampton races.

By his own estimate, he has got through more than £2.5m in his time. He's been on the verge of bankruptcy more times than you'd care to mention. Where did all the money go then? Horses, drink, women… just living basically. And he's had his fair share of troubles with the ladies. Two failed marriages. A long relationship with a young psychology student which ended with her informing the tabloids that Higgins had physically abused her – once fracturing her cheekbone with a hair-dryer. More recently, he was reported to be living rough in a caravan owned by his girlfriend, Holly Haise, until a drunken argument ensued, during which Higgins was stabbed three times with a fork. This coming just



Bill measures his girth in beer

BILL WERBENIUK

Big Bill, yet another Canadian, claimed he couldn't pick up a cue unless he'd had five pints of lager to steady a nervous twitch in his right arm. The resulting 20 pints during an average match soon drew in sponsorship offers from Heineken. At his best, Werbeniuk was ranked eighth in the world, but by the time he was banned for using beta-blockers in 1988, he had slipped to 47th. Werbeniuk quit snooker in 1989 and three comeback attempts all failed. Now unemployed in Vancouver, he's stopped drinking and apparently visits the gym.

"Quick, smash some plates, I've gone all Zorba"

JIMMY WHITE

The spiritual successor to Alex Higgins, Jimmy 'The Whirlwind' left school at 15 to play snooker full-time and turned professional in 1981. He went on to win the Benson & Hedges Championships in 1984 and the Mercantile Credit Classic in 1986, but the world title has always eluded him. Never one to deny his fondness for the sauce and a good night out, Jimmy was once hauled in front the WPBSA in 1985 for misconduct when it turned out that a load of his mates had been crashing in his hotel room during a tournament and causing mayhem.

a fortnight after he was found by police lying in a gutter outside a Plymouth nightclub – explaining that he had been attacked by a man wielding an iron bar.

"I've been waiting for Higgins to be destroyed for years," said promoter Barry Hearn a few years back. "And I'm not the only one. The fact is that people love the self-destructive process. They can't seem to get enough of it." Indeed they cannot. And Higgins, perhaps better than just about anyone in the sporting field, epitomises the enduring myth of the self-destructive genius. TV presenter Tony Francis once wrote that, "Higgins possessed a sublime talent which lifted you out of your seat. It sprang from a gloriously uninhibited spirit which also carried within it the seeds of its own destruction."

In many ways, Higgins' slow and painful decline has run parallel with snooker's own fall from grace. Audiences are dwindling. Sponsorship money is drying up. These days, the game lacks crowd-pleasers like Higgins who could always be relied upon to shake things up if they ever became dull and commonplace. They used to say that no man was bigger than the game. But, arguably, Higgins was. And, even now, clearly at the fag-end of a brilliant and hugely controversial career, his remains the one snooker name most likely to make the sparks fly.

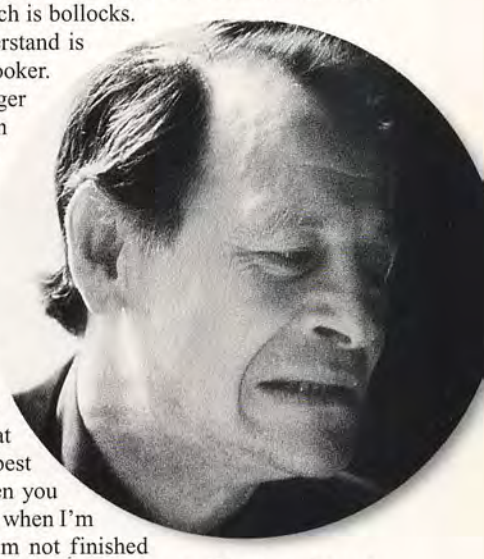
"Y'know," he says, "people come up to me all the time. People from all walks of life. Complete strangers. And they say, 'Alex, thank you. For everything. We love you.' Why do people do this? Because I have charisma. Now, you might ask me what is this thing called charisma. Well, it's a hard thing to define. You can't put it in a bottle. But, whatever it is, it is unique to the individual. Whatever it is, I've fucking got it in spades."

Ask him if he feels hard done by, short-changed by his sport, and he looks you square in the eye and says, "What the fuck do you think? You look at modern day horse racing. Most good horses, they use them sparingly. But I haven't been used sparingly. I've been run off my bastard feet. I've spent 25 years running around like a blue-arsed fly. I've had all these fucking cunts to deal with. And I've had to fend for myself, more or less. If I'd have been born 20 years up the road, who knows? These days, the whole sports thing, it's a big commercial star market. I arrived too early to get the big financial rewards. Then again, can you see me in a Shredded Wheat advert? For fuck's sake! I'd run a mile if I saw a bowl of Shredded Wheat. One mouthful would fucking kill me. I'd sooner watch *Coronation Street* than eat a bowl of Shredded Wheat."

It's a young man's game these days is snooker. And, no buts about it, there's no way back for the likes of Alex Higgins. Part of his tragedy is that he doesn't appear to realize this. On and on and on he goes. Seemingly oblivious of the almighty toll an excessive life has taken on his body and soul. The Hurricane – blowing up a merry old storm right to the end.

"Fight the good fight," he snorts. "Never say die and all that. Life's for living, is it not? See, people talk about me like I'm finished. All washed up as a player. Which is bollocks. What these people fail to understand is that I'm still hungry for snooker. There's times when that hunger goes away. But that hunger can be brought back. All I need is four months' training. And some tender loving care. That's all. Then I'll come storming back.

bollocks. All I need is tender loving care"



"See, what they don't understand is that I've got great willpower. Besides, I'm at my best when I'm cornered. That's when you have to watch out for me. That's when I'm at my most dangerous. And I'm not finished yet. Not by a long way. So you'd better watch out. 'Cos I might just sneak up on you and scare the fucking life out of you." ■

(FASHION STATEMENT.)

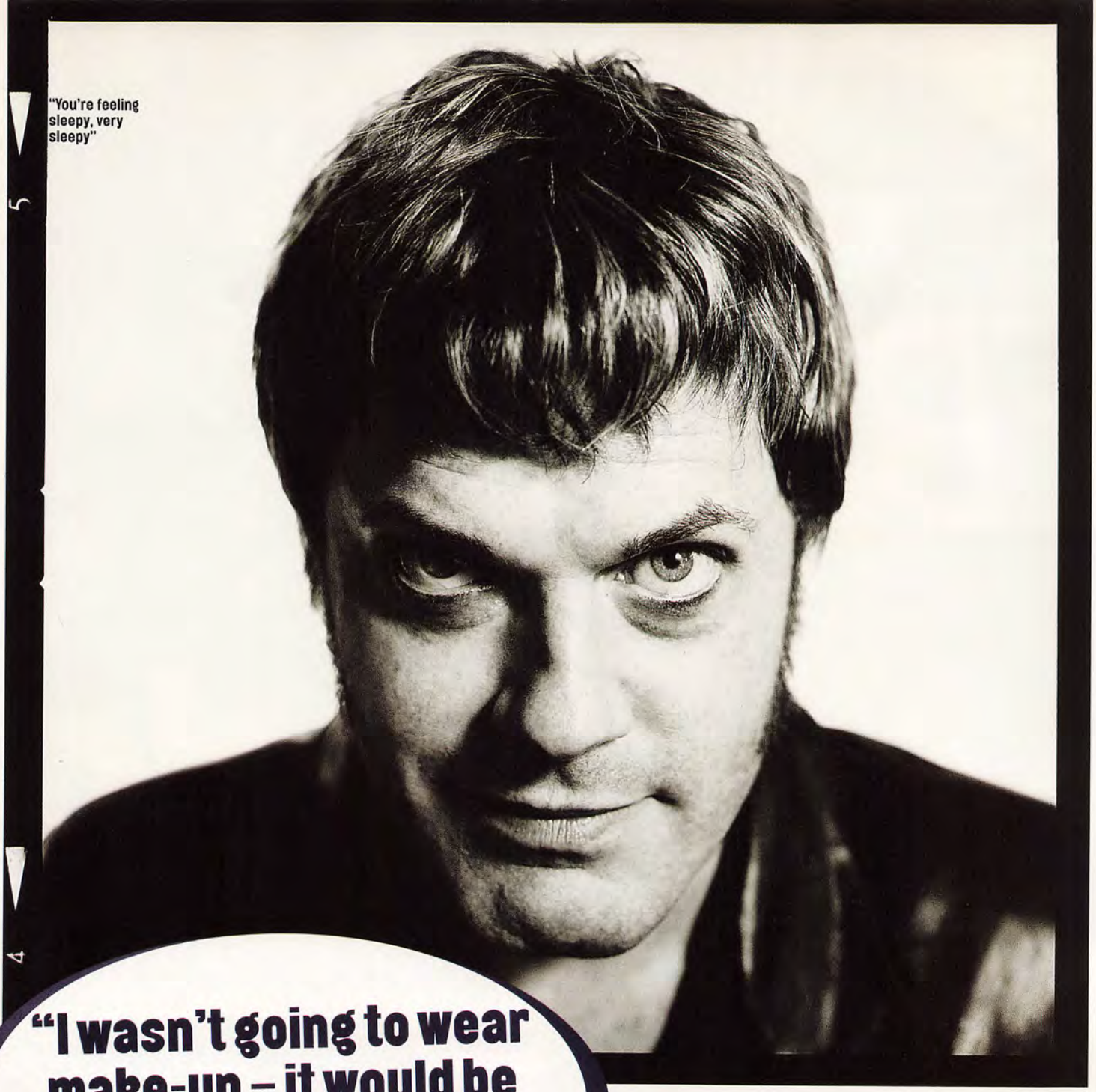
THE ORIGINAL
Ben Sherman

EDDIE IZZARD is odd

From being raised by wolves to the new Avengers movie, it's been a funny life...

EDDIE IZZARD HAS BEEN DYING FOR DAYS AND now, at last, it's almost over. "Me and Shaun Ryder have been leaning out of Minis, shooting people with Uzis," laughs the comedian, with no sign of any remorse. Izzard, once the people's champion of surreal thought and the male hemline, has turned big screen villain and street-fighting man, and I don't think he's coming back. And in the context of his current film, at least, he has to pay the price. Later today, he will be thrown to his death by Uma Thurman. Except he won't. Thanks to the miracle of technology, she doesn't have to be there at all. So, on a late summer's day at Shepperton studios, the slow death of Eddie Izzard is a lonely one too. Well, that's showbusiness. It's tough at the top. ✈

story by MICHAEL HOLDEN photos by ANTONY MEDLEY



"You're feeling sleepy, very sleepy"

"I wasn't going to wear make-up – it would be too difficult a spin for Downing Street"

Like rolling hot tar up a staircase on a cold day, time on a film set can be a slow process. Eddie's demise at the end of the new *Avengers* movie will take up the best part of two days. Production of the film, in which he stars as a bad guy (complete with 'evil'-style sideburns) alongside Sean Connery and Shaun Ryder, versus the good guys, Ralph Fiennes and Uma Thurman, is finishing just as his latest stand-up tour begins. He is as busy as a wasp in a fat child's lunch box and shows no sign of slowing down for the winter. A proven success on the comedy scene, the self-confessed "film nut" has found himself making movies with Sean Connery. How has the "bloke in a dress" from Bexhill-On-Sea who wouldn't "do telly" taken to life in the wide-screen premiership?

"You don't get into huge in-depth conversations with people," reflects Eddie in his trailer (approximately the same size as Bob and Terry's caravan in *The Likely Lads* film). "No one seems to have a big attitude. I've heard about people with big attitudes on film but not on the films I've done. The, er, 'huge coterie' of films I've done. Is 'coterie' a word? What does it mean? Anyway, Ralph's quite quiet and Sean Connery was Sean Connery. I don't think he knew I used to do an impression of him, he never asked about it. I used to do James Mason and then I used to get confused and do 10 Sean Connerys and five James Masons – another coterie of bad impressions. And now I've got Michael Caine to add to them. They're all impressions with no work put in – sitting down and renting some videos or something – I'm too lazy for that. I almost had Alec Guinness the other day," says Eddie, as though Guinness were a rare stamp. "Let's see if I can get him again. He comes to me, occasionally, Alec Guinness…" he makes some strange vowel noises. "No, can't do it."

All this flows forth from Eddie Izzard more or less uninterrupted. In person, and onstage, he's an old-school raconteur possessed of a free-falling logic and the ability to pursue his own confusion like a stoned infant with a degree in philosophy. With only the slightest prompting, ✈

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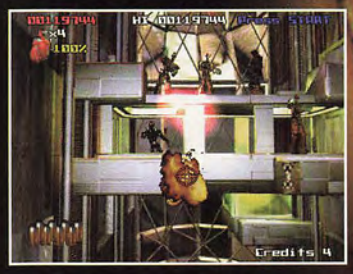

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he's off again: "It was weird working with Sean Connery. Though someone said to me, 'You're not working with him, you're just standing next to him.' I said, 'Alright, I'm standing next to him…' Then he goes back to his trailer – and it's vast! He's in the Ark Royal and I'm in some kind of PT boat. It's OK, but you get trailer envy. 'Cos you think this is great," he indicates his caravanette, "and then you see someone else's and think, 'That bit that goes out on the side – have they got a bath in there?' It's all in the contracts."

Trailer envy apart though, it sounds like he's been having a right laugh.

"When I was out with Shaun Ryder in the Mini with the Uzis, it's a mixture of cowboys and Indians, war games, a big train set and camping. It's just bonkers. And then dying. I have to die, which is a bit crap. I have to re-shoot it today. I have to go, 'Oh bum.' And then die."

Sounds like an easy ride?

"Well, you don't have to learn your lines. I had lines but I took them out because that's what Steve McQueen used to do. Steve used to take 'em out, so I took 'em out. I'm just staring at people, chewing gum and hitting people."

No change there then.

"I'm also in command of a swarm of radio-controlled killer bees. So I'm trying to control them, get my Uzi out, shoot a lot of people and control more bees."

And converse with Shaun Ryder. It can't have been easy.

"Exactly. He was fine. He'd come in and say, 'I've been bad,' and look totally wrecked. He was perfect for the part."

In addition to his success in the cinema, Eddie also found himself invited to sniff the carpets of the corridors of power, along with Noel Gallagher, Kevin Spacey, Su Pollard and Mike Yarwood at Tony Blair's legendary showbiz house-warming. "It was great," he says without hesitation. "When you go in, you have to do the Number 10 photo." Blair's not retreating down the hall picking up his old pants and apologising in a vest, then? "No. That would be good, though. Everyone went kind of kid-like, going, 'Can I have a look in there and what does that do?' I phoned my dad up. That was quite good, 30p's worth of taxpayers' money." Was there music, decks and so on? "There was a big rave going on. No there wasn't. Lots of small pork pies came round, baby and bonsai food, all piled up high. There wasn't any music and we couldn't get into the personal quarters. I looked out into the back garden bit where the rocket landed." And he showed up in make-up. "I wasn't gonna wear it," he admits, reaching for a smoke. "I thought it would be too difficult a spin for Downing Street, but then the Daily Mail made such a fuckin' noise about me going, that they made it easy."

"I was doing really well, parrying and blocking! But there were five of them against one transvestite"

TIME WAS WHEN EDDIE IZZARD WAS THE MOST FAMOUS UNSEEN performer in the country. Although he remained loyal to the stage, that success led to him washing up in the mainstream, doing the rounds of *Have I Got News For You?* and *Shooting Stars*, and then movie parts and Downing Street. Surely it must feel different, to be a household name rather than a fashionable buzz? "I like the work," he answers. "The fame side of it – if you aim at that as the main thing, I think you're a bit lost. It's nice if people are saying nice things. But I have fights in the street now." He does, too. Earlier this year, after receiving some "verbal" on the "street", the "bloke in the dress" started fighting like some cider-mad scaffolder on a Saturday night.

"It was mostly reported true," says Eddie with a hint of amazement. "I came out of Cambridge Corn Exchange. Waiting for a taxi, this bloke comes up and starts giving me stick. I go into a Michael Caine type thing – 'You–do–not–need. To do that. On–the–street. Do you understand?' – for some reason. I was doing this and he just kept going on, so I got really fucked off and vented my spleen at him with a selection of swear-words. So he went for me. I was doing really well, parrying and blocking, but he had four friends there, so it was five of them against the one transvestite. I got several thumps to the face, though there were two women there trying to pull them off, so to speak. But I didn't go down! Like Cool Hand Luke. I was really fucking furious. Why do you have to keep taking this shit? Even though you do generally, I just thought, 'Fuck it.' Anyway they walked off into a pub – just casually wandered off. So I went to try and pull them out of there about half an hour later. I'd also called the police but they couldn't find him – he was pretending to dance, dodging and hiding. Eventually, he was taken to court for assault. It was good to go through the legal process and have it ✈

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work. And I got 100 quid. I thought that was a satisfactory return."

Indeed. No shortage of new material for the new tour, then? "Oh yeah. My thing's on a constant roll. There's this thing where people respond to a story or an arc. But in stand up, you don't really have that. It's like a concept album; it's not really what they're after. But I have characters that come back in. I start in the Old Testament version of the beginning of time and go through to the end of the world, taking in toasters and lawn mowers, the grim reaper, the siege of Troy, and all kinds of other weird shit that comes out." Including, bravely, Princess Di: "My mum died when I was a kid – nobody gave a fuck" – though he says this strictly as observation, not accusation. What he refuses to do, though, is employ his experiences as a top-flight celeb in his routine. "People just think, 'This is fucking nothing to with us.'"

Not that he wouldn't have a perfect right to talk about making movies. He's come a long way from his days of street performing – "I was shit at it" – and working as a waiter. But then perhaps it's as a consequence that he takes the tricky business of being abstract so seriously. "You've gotta keep pushing it out, changing it round and going somewhere else with it, but you can't lose the central thing of it," he explains. "And that balance is a little tricky, 'cos you might think you wanna tear it all up and do stuff in a different way and then you've lost the centre of it. I'd like it so people came away thinking, 'What the fuck was all that?' Some weird, buzzy event where a load of bollocks is talked and you're not really sure where it's going." At that moment a woman from the film crew comes in and tells him, "Mark's just started doing your fall. Will you be screaming at all when you come down from that wire?"

"No," says Eddie, flatly, "I don't scream."

As talk drifts back to the movie game, Eddie relays with evident glee the way the "SFX" boys detonate Evian bottles on location when they're at a loose end, and, on one occasion, let him drive round a quarry in a fast car doing wheelspins. Could it be that, underneath all the surrealism and the make-up, there was part of him born to do wheelspins and have street fights? "Absolutely!" he responds, enthusiastically. "I was a real footballing kid. You've gotta understand that I'm a male tomboy. I love all that climbing trees stuff – but make-up, too. So I'm Emma Peel, you see? I'm a male version of Emma Peel, and that's where I wanna get to. That'll confuse the fuck out of **loaded** readers, won't it?" ◼

A live video of Eddie Izzard's recent tour, Glorious, *is out now on Ella via VVL.* The Avengers *will be released in early summer.*

"Gawd, I knew I shouldn't have had that last pickled onion"

NICE BLOUSE, MATE

Great transvestites of our time

Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon
Dragged up in *Some Like It Hot* to try and escape murderous gangsters. Now why didn't Al Pacino think of that in *Scarface*?

Mother Riley
Man who dressed as an old bat to fight off old bats in such aged black-and-white flicks as *Mother Riley Meets The Vampire, The Mummy, The Werewolf* etc, etc.

David Bowie
Pictured in a frock on the original album of *The Man Who Sold The World.* He claimed it was "a bloke's dress". Which, as he owned it, was, strictly speaking, true.

J Edgar Hoover
One of the most powerful men in American history and head of the FBI for over 40 years, most of it in stockings and suspenders. US president Lyndon Baines Johnson said of him, "I'd much rather have him inside the tent pissing out, than outside the tent pissing in." Lovely image.

Hinge & Brackett
Ancient variety turn, two geezers who impersonated a pair of genteel old lesbians. Big in Brighton.

Kurt Cobain
Borrowed dresses from Courtney Love, either to make a telling point about the fluctuating nature of masculinity, or because his manky, torn jeans were in the wash.

PHOTOS: RONALD GRANT ARCHIVE/STEVE DOUBLE/MSI

"I love that climbing trees stuff – but make-up, too. So I'm Emma Peel, you see?"

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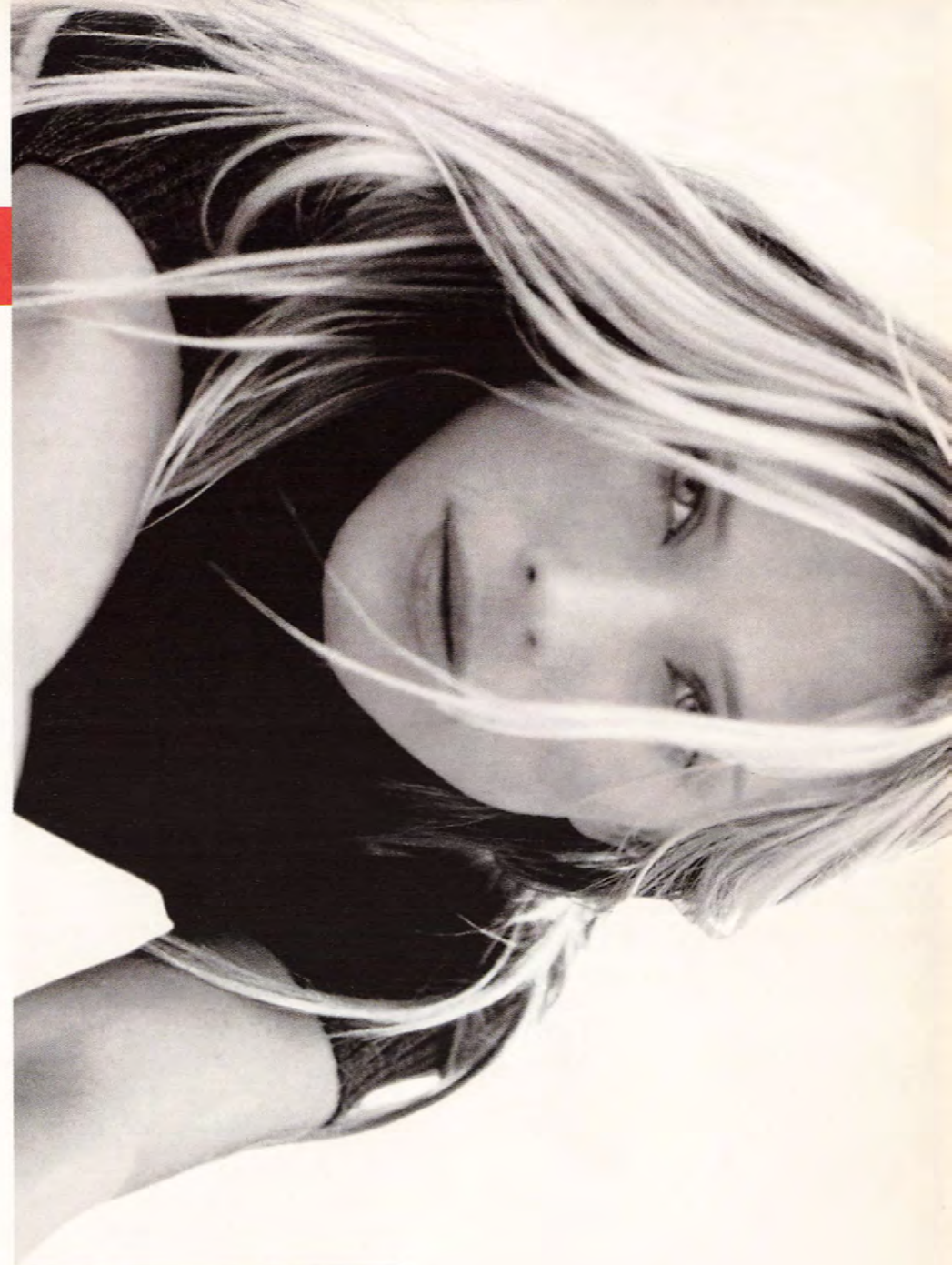


don't imitate

Looking to get up to a bit of no-good? Forget sloth and avarice, how about a bit of swan twaddling?

"Without sin," the late Peter Cook once remarked, "life would hardly be worth living. The thought of going out into the world and committing some great and terrible sin – it's one of the few reasons for getting out of bed in the morning."

Sin. As the great funny man said, it's both a great and a bloody terrible thing. Always has been. Always will be. Great: because there's nothing quite like the pungent whiff of sin to sharpen life's little pleasures. Terrible: because there's nothing like the thought of suffering an eternity of hell and damnation to louse up an otherwise enjoyable day. ✈

story by JON WILDE

"Eat this and then let's invent clothes"

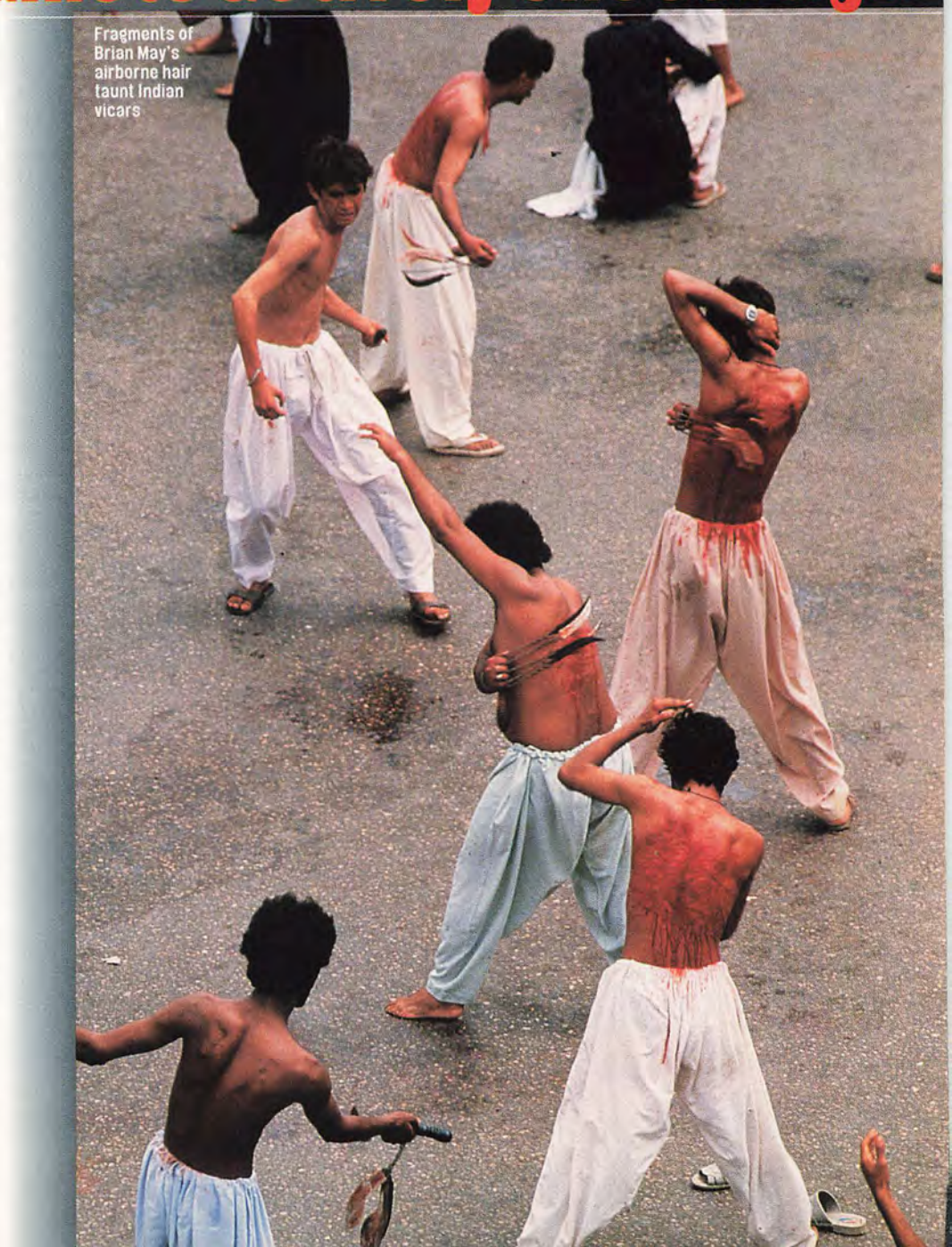
Great and terrible. 'Twas ever thus. Right from the off – when, egged on by his missus, some wayward bloke called Adam decided to disregard the orders of the Head Knock Upstairs and liberate a single measly apple off a tree in the Garden of Eden. Bringing no end of trouble upon himself. And thereby bringing into being the troublesome notion of Original Sin, which argues that we all inherit a flawed or tainted nature, and cannot resist a bit of sin now and again. In short, like it or not, we're all a bunch of dirty rotten sinners, every last man Jack of us. We are… therefore we sin. Which is a bit of an embuggerance if you happen to have a hankering to live a pure and blameless life. But there's sod all you can do about it, mush.

Of course, the notion of sin has evolved a fair bit since those Garden of Eden days – with every religion under the sun getting in on the act and thumping the tub for its own idea of

Tantric Buddhists actively encourage

what constitutes a sinful act. The result being that we've got ourselves into a right old bugger's muddle – not knowing whether we're coming and going when it comes to sin. I mean, you've got your Christian lot who set great store by the idea that everything that causes human beings to fall short of the glory of God qualifies as a bona fide sin. Then there's our Jewish friends, Red Sea pedestrians one and all, whose whole idea of sin seems to be connected in one way or another with food. "Pork scratchings, not allowed" – that type of thing. There's your Hindu types who believe that untoward behaviour guarantees your return in the next life as an earwig. Then there's your Muslims, who tend to believe that everything, the whole kit and caboodle, is touched with sin. Which, if nothing else, saves them the bother of working up a sweat trying to figure out what should and shouldn't be considered sinful.

But it's not just the Premier League religions who go big on sin. The religious equivalents of Doncaster Rovers and Cardiff City are just as keen, if not more so. Indeed, the further you venture down the religious version of the Football League, the more barmy notions of sin tend to get. Take your African religions. A rum lot to say the least. There's the Shilluk religion, highly fashionable around the west bank of the Nile, which, among other things, draws a firm line at vampirism, bedwetting and not shaving the patch of hair between one's index and middle fingers. Or what about the Lovedu religion? All the rage in the Transvaal, apparently. They offer a wide variety of sins including any sport involving ladders, and lying on a bed of nails on Fridays. Mad, clearly. But not half as mad as some of your more obscure Polynesian religions, including the sex-obsessed Marae. Leaving nothing to chance, they put a firm embargo on such far-flung specialities as buttock-biting, autopederasty (the act of a man inserting his penis into his own anus), felching (the act of sucking semen out of a partner's



Fragments of Brian May's airborne hair taunt Indian vicars

vagina or anus) and masturbating while defecating. After you, Claude…

Of course, sin and sex have always been inextricably linked. Granted, there are a few free-and-easy religions that go along with the idea that there's nothing much wrong with a bit of the other. Like your Tantric Buddhists, who actively encourage fertility rituals and even ritual orgies – and generally take the line that loads of sex is good for one's spiritual growth. Well, of course it is. Seems obvious, don't it? But most world religions take an entirely different line: arguing that a spot of the old in-out is about as sinful as it gets.

Take your Christian mob. Now, they've always had a downer on the whole sex thing. It goes all the way back to the wonderfully named St Augustine Of Hippo. Supposedly one of the greatest of the Latin Church fathers, he was single-handedly responsible for spreading the malicious rumour that Original Sin was transmitted through the sexual act. Which was a bit rich coming from a randy old bugger like him, who fathered 13 kids by different women during his lifetime. And about whom it was said that he would have fucked a snake if he could have got someone to hold it down.

Whatever, since Hippo's time, virtually all forms of sexuality have been frowned upon by Minnie Meddlers of all religious persuasions. Indeed, in most religions you care to name, almost anything to do with the pleasures of the flesh was seen as a heinous sin on a par with chopping your neighbour's head off with a tomahawk and parading around the streets with it mounted on the end of a big stick. Until the 12th Century, that is, when some wiseacre named Cardinal Huguccio came up with the ingenious idea that there was nothing actually

fertility rituals and even ritual orgies

sinful about a good roll in the hay – so long as it was only practised within marriage and (hark at this) so long as neither partner actually enjoyed it. "Only he that feels nothing, commits no sin," he proclaimed. To which, the rest of the world replied, "You must be fucking jesting, mate!" Nevertheless, the idea took hold and refused to budge for centuries. Indeed, things had got so out of hand by the 14th Century that the world and his brother had convinced themselves that they would risk eternal damnation and loads of other horrible stuff if they so much as dared to think about sex. With the result that, around the time that a boatload of diseased rats arrived on a boat from France and started spreading the dreaded Black Death, the steets were full of daft buggers wandering about with sacks over their bonces, whipping themselves with tree bark.

Hence the story, possibly apocryphal, concerning the wife of the 15th Century churchwarden who took her seat in the front row of the pews, tripped and rolled over, revealing her underwear to the congregation. Seeing her predicament, the priest stood in front of her and said, "If any man should cast a glance at this poor, unfortunate woman, may the Lord strike him blind!" And a man in the third row, a blacksmith by trade, turned to his mate and said, "Fuck it! I think I'll risk an eye!" And who could really blame him?

It carried on like this until the late 17th Century, around the time of the invention of the trumpet, when Alberto Magnus, in his De Secretis Mulierum, decreed that there was no way to avoid sinning in the area of sexual relationships. At least where women were concerned. "Young women," he wrote, "feel a strong desire for sex. It is therefore a sin, in nature, to keep them from it and stop them having sex with the man they favour, although their doing so is a sin according to accepted morality." ✈

"That'll teach you to steal the last Mignons Morceaux"

Squirrels were trained to have sex with both men and women

Anyway, by this time, the church had discovered that while they were getting all steamed up about what men and women were doing in the privacy of their own bedrooms, sex between humans and animals had become the in thing. Plainly, this sort of caper had always gone on. I mean, the sage Herodotus mentions an ancient Egyptian temple at Mendes where goats and squirrels were trained to have sex with both men and women as part of their fertility rituals. By all accounts, Ancient Egyptians actually used coitus with female crocodiles to increase male virility. Sticking your prick down a crocodile's gob – it's over and above the call the duty, if you ask me.

Still, down through the centuries, intimate relations with animals became more and more commonplace. To the extent that even royalty got in on the act – George III being well-known for his early-morning routine of wanking off the horses in his stable. Once asked by the Archbishop if he did it to improve his nags' general sense of well-being, he replied, "Not at all. I do it because I enjoy it." Fair enough, I suppose. Around this time, the Catholic church were so alarmed at the popularity of zoophilia between men, cows and sheep that they actually tried to ban the employment of male herdsmen, in case they gave in to the obvious temptation of being surrounded by animals without clothes.

Most religions of the world tend to be on the same wavelength when it comes to bestiality – though there is rumoured to be a religious tribe in the Andes who believe that having regular sex with farmyard animals (including geese and deer) increases their chances of marching through the gates of heaven when their time's up. Well, they're in for a shock when they stand eyeball to eyeball with St Peter, that's a fair bet.

Then again, maybe they belong to one of the many religions who have built a get-out clause into their rulebook. What's known in the trade as 'salvation' and 'repentance', which appears to mean that you can commit any sin (big or small, mortal or venial, take your pick). And you'll be forgiven by The Top Man if real regret and true resolve to lead a new life are shown. Proper handy, this. The barman has overcharged you for a bitter lemon. You momentarily lose your rag and plunge a corkscrew through the centre of his brain – killing him instantly. No problem, so it would seem. Just saunter off to your nearest confession box, give it to the geezer straight, say a few Hail bleeding Marys, and you're out of there, slate clean, no worries, absolutely scot free. Same goes right across the board. Passing a farmyard, fancy a go on that Fresian cow, what's stopping you boyo? Clamber aboard, go at it like a steam train for half-an-hour, clamber off. Straight off to the priest:

"What you been up to, son?"

"Well, I've been shagging a cow, father."

"Is that all? Just say three Hail Marys and promise ✈

UNLIKELY SINS THROUGH THE AGES

1 Ballet dancing
Hard to credit but there was a time when religious types were up in arms at the thought of this most civilised of dances. Indeed, a fear of ballet dancers was behind the Bishop of Durham's contention in 1798 that the French were attempting to overcome England's defences by smuggling legions of ballet dancers into the country. "Ballet is a beastly sin," fumed His Nibs, "and we won't stand for it."

2 Wiping one's arse with the back of one's hand
During the 19th Century, pith-helmeted Christian missionaries would make a habit of wandering around obscure parts of the globe, attempting to civilise the natives. Particularly zealous were a breakaway group known as the Modern Canterbury Pilgrims who spent three years attempting to persuade the African tribe of Guapolo that wiping their arses with the backs of their hands was not only unhygienic but also extremely sinful.

3 Croquet
Made an official sin by the 19th Century Arctic religion of Lappola who argued that the game was "a crude and vulgar metaphor for the primary sexual act". Something about big balls and gaping holes, apparently.

4 Pie throwing
Daft but undeniably true. The Bongomen of the Afro-Caribbean Convince Cult are completely sold on the idea that the throwing of pies (especially the pork or custard) invoke evil spirits. Start chucking pies any where near a Bongoman and bang goes your no-claims bonus, pal.

5 Sex with armpits
A lovely way to pass the time. Just don't try it around the Hachimen of Japan, who consider it jolly indecent and will cut your balls off with a bread knife, feed them to wolves and ask questions later. You have been warned.

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to be a good lad in future, will you?"

"Is that it then?"

"Yeah, that's it. Now fuck off. And stick a tenner on the collection plate on your way out."

See, it's a great thing is salvation. Gets you off the hook every time. A marvellous invention. Christ on a bike! They even have this thing called death-bed repentance which allows you to sin like a bastard all your life and then receive absolution just as you're about to croak. So you can fall as deep into the shit-heap as you like and still come up smelling like Shake'n'Vac. Bloody marvellous. So marvellous, in fact, that you'd think it would have sounded the death knell for sin. I mean, if you can sin all you like, cop a plea, then waltz off into the sunset completely absolved, then you'd think that the whole notion of sin would be completely devalued. Not at all. It's been going strong for centuries – the very mention of it still sufficient to scare the knickers off heathen and God-fearer alike.

Indeed, only very recently has sin begun to lose something of its old bounce. Very probably, this has got something to do with the '60s, when everyone grew their hair long, rolled around in the mud rather a lot, and sinned it up to the limit. With the result that sinful behaviour (eating loads of cream buns after staying up all night smoking ganja, coveting your neighbour's ox, doing fuck-all for long periods, rogering your neighbour's missus, wanking into a loaf of bread with the middle gouged out, etc) simply became the norm. The Seven Deadly Sins – through the Swinging '60s and Permissive '70s, they fell like ninepins. Wrath, gluttony, avarice, lust, envy, pride, sloth – everyone was at it. And, consequently, sin started singing an entirely different tune.

Not that it ever lost its clout altogether. It's just that, by the '80s, what had previously existed as a way of stopping us from doing the kind of things of which church-going types would doubtlessly take a very dim view, now became simply an acceptable way to tear up the pea patch. It was like, after 2,000 years of civilisation, we finally twigged that the whole point of sin was to make pleasure even more pleasurable. In simple terms: the degree of pleasure is directly proportional to the size of the sin and the depth of the guilt felt afterwards. As anyone who has ever taken it upon themselves to fart into a sock and post it through the letter box of some old buzzard of an OAP will understand only too well.

So sin became ever more popular. And, consequently, sin became less sinful. Which rather defeated the object. In recent years, there has been a concerted effort to create a few new sins to keep us all on our toes. Environmental sin, for example. Very trendy among the New Labour crowd who would have us believe that an eternity spent roasting over Satan's barbecue awaits for those who fail to recycle their empty cornflakes boxes. I mean, who are they fucking kidding?

Nah. What's needed is a new set of top-notch sins. Real blockbusters. The kind that would give Satan himself the horn. Which is where the Church Of The SubGenius, the world's first industrial church (slogan: 'Fuck 'em if they can't take a joke!'), comes in. For the last couple of years, this enterprising 'religious' group has been addressing the problem of sin's diminishing influence. Just last year, it launched a campaign to convince all and sundry that the only real sin was not donating $30 to its subscription department. A good try. But no slam dunk. Its latest publication, *Revelation* (Fireside Books, $14.95), offers an introductory list of spanking new sins. As explained in the introduction: "Since most of you have already committed all the acts that are considered sins in other faiths, we have compiled a list of New Sins. We have gone to great lengths to ensure that all these forbidden acts are so outré that you are unlikely to have thought of them yet yourself." The list includes beer wanking, self-amputation and sodomizing Richard Nixon's rotting corpse; the rest are all reprinted on your left, every one a coconut. Now, if he's so big on the idea of sin, why the fuck couldn't Tony Blair have thought of it first, then? It's back to the drawing board, matey, and 10 Hail Marys while you're at it, you stupid bugger. ■

Please leave my tiny cow happy

The Seven Deadly Sins – through the Swinging '60s and the permissive '70s they fell like ninepins

SINS ACCORDING TO THE CHURCH OF SUBGENIUS

Buffalo frenching
Swan twaddling
Frog flogging
Placing grapes in one's anus without first lubricating the seeds
Jesus wound poking
Playing hide'n'seek with blind people in brightly lit rooms
Alien taunting
Anvil biting
Sheep bombing
Cornflake bouncing
Maggot fellating
Brain chewing
Head sharpening
Cattle mutilating
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Llama yanking
Poking Jim Morrison's corpse with a sharp stick to determine whether it is made of Play-Doh

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can't supernoise

Cum on, wearz me peaze? Noddy Holder, himself an integral part of Yuletide tradition, sits down to Christmas dinner with loaded

NODDY HOLDER IS SINGING 'CUM ON FEEL THE NOIZE'. THAT MUCH IS NOT surprising. The television cameras are moving in for a close-up and he is passing the microphone to me. That much is not just surprising but also, frankly, fucking alarming. A covers band are murdering the tune, the man who wrote it is standing less than three feet away and I am now in possession of a live microphone. And on television. The words are unnecessarily Sellotaped to a light at the foot of the stage. They go something like this:

"Cum on feel the noize/Girlz grab the boyz"
Something that doesn't rhyme with oyz (Repeat to fade.)

That's what I'm singing, anyway. The rest is all improvisation. Clint Boon, former bowl-headed keyboard wizard of the Inspiral Carpets is dancing around the television studio with his hand up the back of a remote-controlled ventriloquist's dummy, and some other people, who might get recognised once every four weeks whilst shopping in Bury town centre, are supplying the chorus. Somehow, Noddy Holder is retaining a semblance of dignity in the midst of this instantly forgettable satellite TV chaos. Star quality.

loaded is in the studio as a 'celebrity' guest on *Elvis Has Just Left The Building*, a prestigious, high-budget pop quiz on Granada Sky which employs Noddy Holder and Clint Boon as team captains. "It's a bloody good crack," says Holder in the hospitality area afterwards. ✈

story by BILL BORROWS photos by DEREK RIDGERS

een va

Noddy: not just for Christmas

"I love it. I love getting involved in new things and this is something new for me." New for all of us, in fact. The losing captain has to kiss the other's arse at the end of the show. Something you rarely see on *A Question Of Sport*. Did the pre-pubescent Clint Boon, sat in front of a black-and-white television set watching *Top Of The Pops* in 1973, ever imagine that he would one day get to kiss the arse of the lead singer from Slade? He thinks for a moment. "I'd always hoped to, obviously," he says, before adding with measured solemnity, "but it's fair to say, I never thought I'd manage it."

At some point in the mid '70s, during the era of the three-day week and a couple of years before punk, Mr Holder was the most famous man in Britain. His band were the biggest thing since the Beatles and he was

"My kids see old film of Slade now and piss themselves laughing. They're much more thrilled when Oasis do 'Cum On Feel The Noize'"

the biggest thing in that band (a remarkable achievement for a man who, without Cuban heels, would struggle to make the minimum height requirement for the Metropolitan Police Force). He is a diminutive man with eyes like gob-stoppers sunk into Plasticine, and his extravagant facial furniture often provoked journalists to describe him as a refugee from a Dickens novel. But he was dangerously sexy. As he told the *New Musical Express* in August 1974, "One of them grabs hold of you and pulls you down, while another one cuts your hair off with a pair of scissors." He was talking about female fans. It was like that in the '70s. As a 22-year-old, Noddy Holder told the *Sun* newspaper, "I would never sleep with a girl if I knew she was under 16, and I do try to avoid getting them pregnant." A man of honour, then. Nod rocks. Has always rocked. You want some? Come on, then…

"I'VE STILL GOT PEOPLE TO TELL ME I'M A TWAT," HE SAYS. "I WAS living in the Midlands at the height of the fame and the little time we had off, I'd go home and drink in the Trumpet. Its full name was the Cunt & Trumpet, and the story was that it was called this because of a gypsy woman who used to go in there and play the trumpet with her cunt… that was my regular boozer and I went there for years and years." At this stage of the day, Mr Holder is ordering halves of lager but going through them like prohibition might be on the cards in the next couple of hours. He's dictating the pace but I'm keeping up with him.

"In the very early stages, it was a case of, if he gets the drinks in he's a flash twat, if he doesn't he's a tight arse; but it doesn't last because they suddenly realise you are the same bloke you always were. I was no different… I was just a working musician on the road. They always knew me as a musician, it was just that, all of a sudden, I was a very successful musician. That was all."

Less than two years later, he had a flat in London, more groupies than he could find time for, and was the front-man for a band which could not fail. That was all. The only band in the last 20 years to approach Slade's dramatic rise from obscurity to sustained domestic chart domination is Oasis, and even then, they're not close. It's taken that long.

Slade's main rival at the beginning, the target you might say, was Marc Bolan and T. Rex. "We knew we could catch Bolan because our following was building day-by-day," remembers Holder proudly. "We also had a brilliant live reputation.

"You were either a Slade or a T. Rex fan; there was an ongoing battle between the two." The parallels with the Oasis and Blur feud are apparent, and the fact that Oasis covered 'Cum On Feel The Noize' and invited Holder along to the Maine Road gig to watch it, is perhaps not a coincidence. He enjoyed it. "They did a great version of it in front of 40,000 people and it was a little ego boost for me seeing a song we'd written 23 years ago still holding up today." 'Ride A White Swan', anyone? Slade overtook Bolan with practised ease.

Disgustingly perhaps, I have resorted to slipping a vodka in every half-pint Mr Holder drinks. I note with some regret that it has no effect at all. He just carries on. "We were never a drugs band. We were always a drinking band; we liked to drink and our audience liked to drink – we were that sort of good-time band. People liked us for that, you know. There were drugs about in the '70s but that wasn't really our bag, we weren't really into that scene. A lot of our contemporaries were, but we were much happier with booze."

And the groupies? There is a clearing of a throat and it's not mine. "Well, we enjoyed ourselves, certainly. There was one occasion when a girl fan went mad in America, broke into my hotel room and slashed her wrists. Tried to kill herself. I had to kick the bathroom door in and drag her out. That was not pleasant but, you know, usually it was OK. The music business now isn't like it was in the '70s. It wasn't as corporate as it is today, with people's careers mapped out by record company executives. You weren't in it for the dough, the dough was the icing on the cake, so to speak. When Brian Connolly [*lead singer with Glamrock band Sweet*] died I wasn't surprised – this happens in rock'n'roll. It's not unusual to have casualties. It's the luck of the draw, quite frankly. Loads of my mates in groups have died."

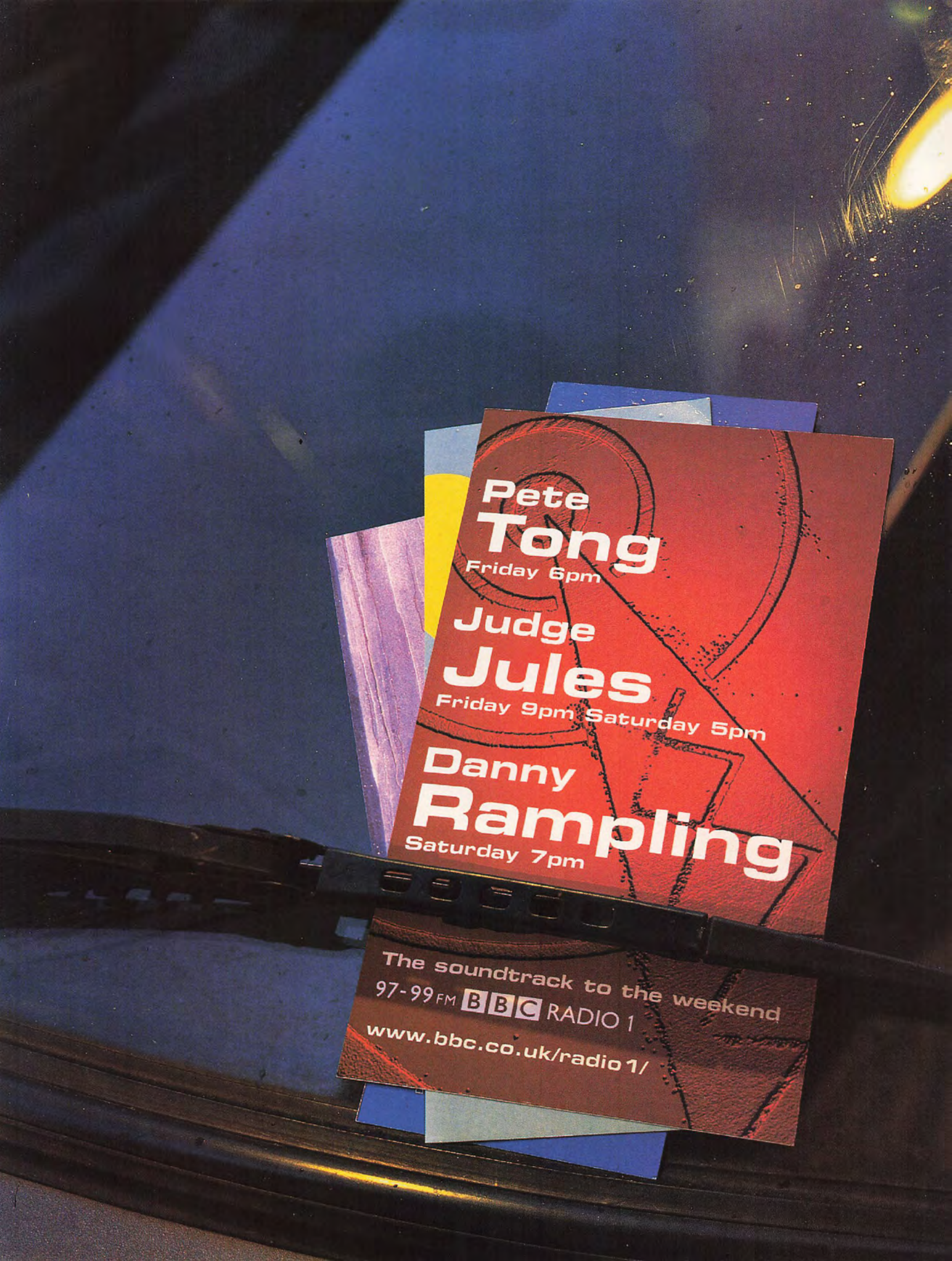
For the record, Mr Holder is now leading in the drinking stakes. Imagine if Noddy Holder was, by chance, your uncle. Would you boast about it? Would you keep it quiet? Not even Mr Holder knows how his relatives deal with this one. Do you accept that someone else is forever destined to be the most famous/sucessful person in your family or do you not? If you are that person, do you think that the rest of the family respect you or do you think they bitch about you behind your back? Have a guess. An untypical post-dinner conversation on Boxing Day in Smethwick…

"Have I ever told you about the time at the Drake Hotel in New York City?"

"No, Uncle Noddy."

"Well, it would have been either 1975 or 1976. I was living in America then and I'd gone down to the lobby in the Drake, when Muhammad Ali came in with all his minders. I mean, they were all brick shithouses and he was towering above them. I was amazed how big he was, having only seen him on TV before. I shook his hand but didn't chit-chat or anything. Anyway, then I get in the lift, and who's standing there but bloody Pele. I went up about six or seven floors with him in the same lift and he actually recognised me, ✈

"Nnnngggrrrr!"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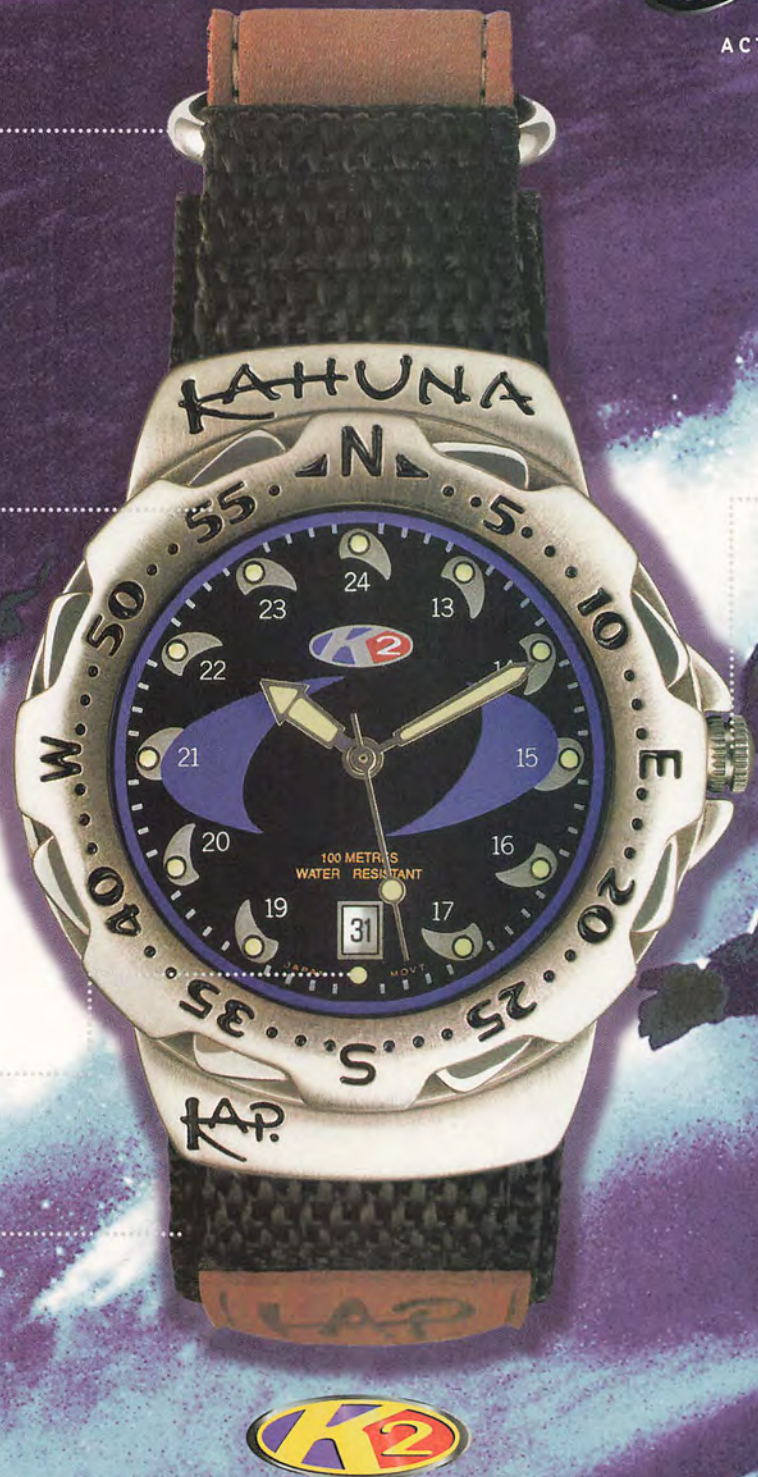

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Pele did. I spoke to him. I said, 'Nice to meet you, I've always admired you as a footballer but you won't know who I am.' And he said, 'Man, I know who you are,' and he knew. This was bloody Pele, I was shell-shocked…"

"Is Uncle Noddy telling that Pele story again?"

"No, Mum."

"He is, isn't he?"

"Everybody wanted to make it in America," he continues, undeterred. "In places like Philadelphia, New York and St Louis, we could actually top the bill by drawing 20,000 to 25,000 people… but we couldn't break through with big hit singles. Our singles were far too rowdy for AM Radio. It was only at the end of the '70s and the beginning of the '80s that bands like Kiss, who admit they were heavily influenced by us, started to break through. A band called Quiet Riot covered 'Cum On Feel The Noize' and took it to Number One in the States in 1983. It was a carbon copy of our version. I think if MTV had been going in the '70s, we'd have broken through – we were a very visual act."

"Has Uncle Noddy fallen asleep yet?"

"Not really. I think he's about to start banging on about Charles Aznavour again…"

"Oh no, not again."

"Our first 18 hits were all Top Three records and the ones that were held off the Number One spot were kept off by… well, by records like 'She' by Charles Aznavour. Even today, we're third in the line of British groups who have had a number of Number One records, behind the Beatles and the Stones. Well, before Take That, anyway. It weren't a bad achievement, really. But Charles Aznavour?" He drains another half and tucks into a straight vodka.

PHOTO: CHRIS WALTER

NODDY ON THE BAND

Dave Hill (guitar): "It did surprise me when he came out as a Jehovah's Witness, given the type of fella he was, but he seems a lot happier for it.

He doesn't try and stuff it down your neck or anything, but then he'd never try and convert me – he'd have no chance, really." Now in Slade 2.

Jim Lea (bass): "Jim just keeps himself to himself, really. He always was the quiet one and the bloke I used to write with. When I got tired of touring, Jimmy called it a day as well. The last time I saw him, in fact all of them, was when they came on to do my *This Is Your Life*, last year." Now knitting somewhere.

Don Powell (drums): "After he was in a car crash, he had a terrible problem remembering things and would sometimes forget how the songs went in the time it took him to walk on the stage, but we got him through it. He lost both his sense of smell and taste, as well. We used to give him just tonic instead of gin and tonic but he always knew. Somehow." Also now in Slade 2.

Chas Chandler (manager): "Better than either Brian Epstein (Beatles) or Andrew Loog Oldham (Stones). This is a man who was in a massive band in his own right (Animals), managed and produced Jimi Hendrix, and then managed us. You can't say fairer than that." Deceased.

IF YOU LIVE IN THE WEST MIDLANDS, you might already have been visited by Dave Hill. He was (and still is) the guitarist with Slade but is now also a Jehovah's Witness. Imagine *that* knocking on your door. If the circa 1973 Noddy Holder seemed to have emerged from a Dickens novel, Dave Hill was put together by JRR Tolkien. He is also, according to the former lead singer, the reason why Slade acquired a reputation for glitter and sartiorial… ahem… innovation. "We weren't really a Glam band at the time. In fact, none of us actually wore glittery stuff apart from Dave. I had my hat with mirrors before Glam rock started."

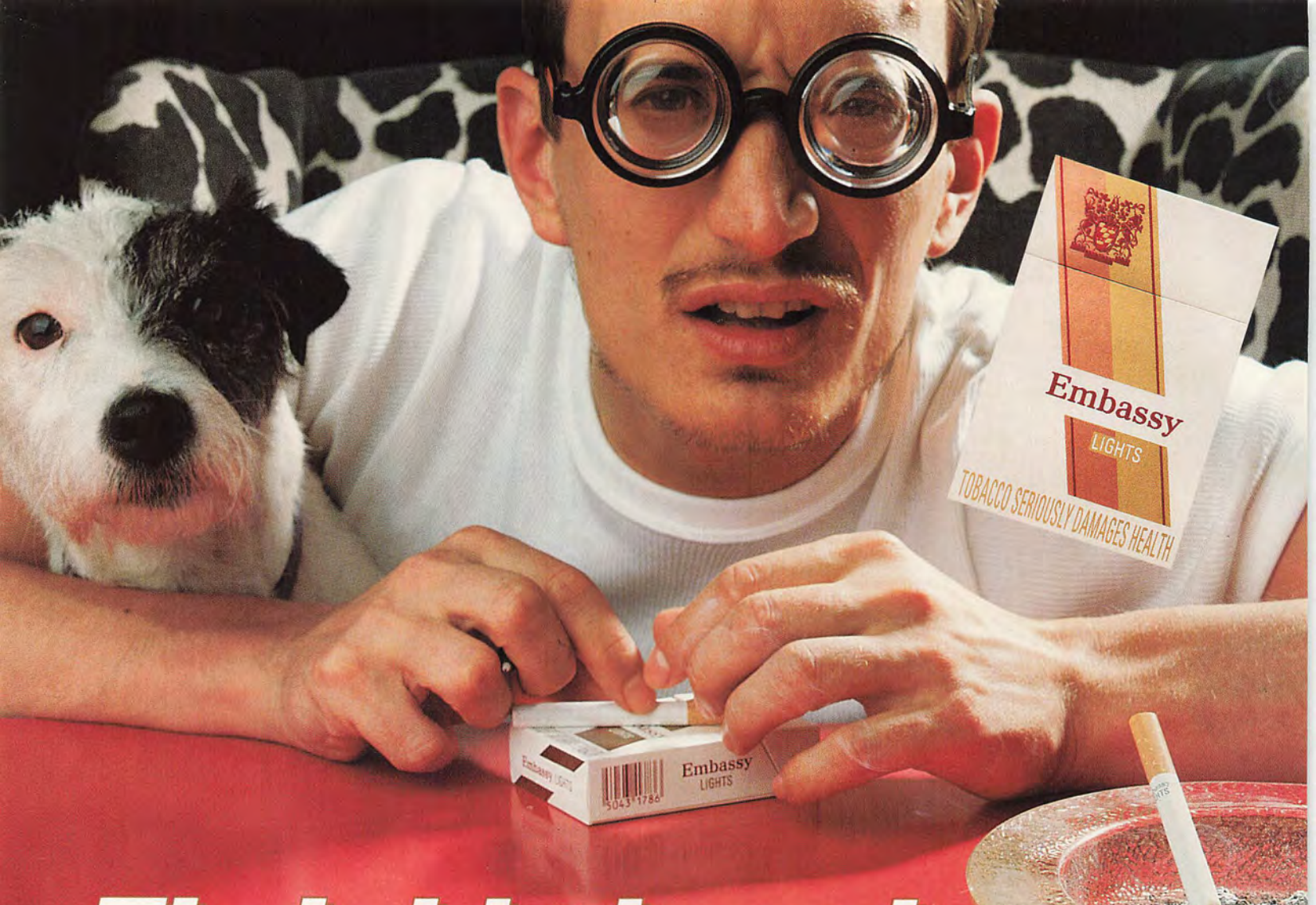
Were Slade the ugliest band ever?

"Definitely, yes," he laughs. "And proud of it. Let's say we were definitely not a pretty boy band and that's for sure. My two eldest kids are 21 and 19. They weren't alive when the actual Glam Rock thing was going strong but they see the old film of it now and piss themselves laughing. I don't think they can relate that person on there to being their dad. They are much more thrilled when Oasis do 'Cum On Feel The Noize' or Vic and Bob take the piss out of us on the TV…" But that might all be about to change.

After a highly acclaimed cameo role in the *Grimleys*, alongside Jack Dee, recent satellite TV work and a couple of TV commercials, Noddy Holder and his voice are becoming familiar to a new generation of punters. That is, of course, if they have been in solitary confinement in a Puerto Rican prison for the last 30 years and have never heard 'Merry Xmas Everybody', the perennial office party favourite and a frequent precursor to many regrettable sexual encounters. It also means that he would not have to work again if he didn't want to. "When me and Jimmy (Lea) wrote it, we knew we'd written a Number One hit but we didn't know it would still be going strong after 25 years.

"We recorded it in New York in 1973 in the middle of a very hot, muggy Summer. It was boiling hot. It's never actually been re-released, it's just never been deleted. You can get it every year if you want it." Call it his part-pension plan/part-repayment for the money that they should have made during the '70s ("83 per cent bloody tax"). "If we'd just gone and sat on a beach in Barbados and done absolutely nothing for a couple of years, we'd have been far better off, but that's not what we wanted to do. We enjoyed going out and playing and being on the road. There's no way we would have wanted to be exiled from our home and families."

And then the touring became too much and Holder put the mirrored hat in a safety deposit box somewhere and the band split up. Actually, it didn't. "I'd never say never," he says, still sober. "We've never actually sat down and said we've split up. If something came along that we thought was worthwhile, then maybe we'd consider it. I can't see it happening but I can't rule it out either." That should get them talking down the Cunt & Trumpet. ■



Tim's big break

PART SIX

You've got to admire Tim's persistance. He's been chewed up, spat out, chopped up into little pieces and stomped all over in his underpants by the advertising industry. There he was on his way to celebrity central, advertising Embassy fags in loaded, when he got derailed and shunted into sad git stockyard. "OK, I've been laughed at, paraded in front of the world in my kaks, and had my breakfast stolen by a dog," thought Tim. "At least I'll be getting a tonne of free fags out of this for myself and me mates." Sadly for Tim, there are rules about advertising fags. Committee of Advertising Practice rule 66.14 says, "Smokers should not be encouraged to buy or stock large quantities of cigarettes." Sorry Tim, mate. You know money doesn't grow on trees, and nor do fags. They grow on bushes.

PHOTOGRAPHY: JENNIFER CAWLEY

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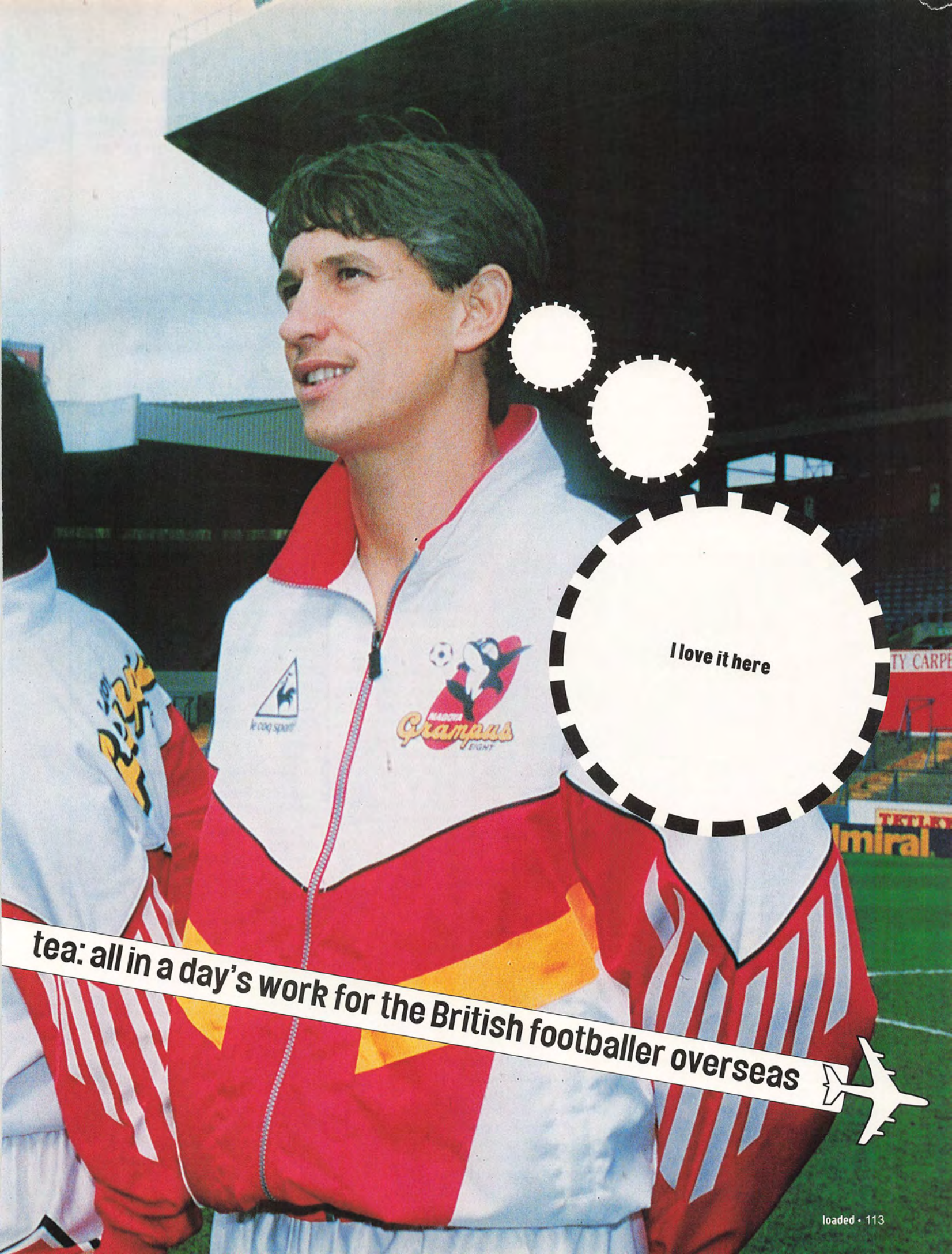
Ah so
He is goalhanger
He speak Spanish, apparently
I find Lineker san very boring
I like him better at Spurs
I'm gonna stamp on his fuckin' toe

story by PETE MAY

Spicy grub, silly money, foreign languages and weak



tea: all in a day's work for the British footballer overseas

DURING AN UNHAPPY season at Juventus, Ian Rush once reflected: "Italy – it's like a foreign country." For all the success of the Linekers and Platts, the typical British footballer's attitude to life abroad was better summed up by Wolves' Steve Bull during Italia '90. Cappuccino in Sardinia had nothing on the Black Country for Bully: "All I'm doing now is eating soup and pasta," he moaned. "When I get back, it's going to be a good fish and chips and a pint of bitter!" And everyone remembers *Fantasy Football* digging up footage of West Brom's John Trewick at the Great Wall of China saying, "If you've seen one wall, you've seen them all."

But thanks to the Bosman ruling, allowing players to move more freely between club sides in different countries, expat British footballers are having to learn to be more cosmopolitan. Once, any player with O-levels was nicknamed "the Professor", nowadays, stars like John Collins are sitting down with real-life professors. When Collins left Celtic for Monaco, he spent a fortnight with a Professor of French at Glasgow University. He and his wife Susan were not allowed to use any English, and by the end of the period, Collins was giving interviews in French.

John Collins gambled it all in Monaco for a cheese pasty. Probably

He's now happily settled in Monaco; he has dinner with his French team-mates and says, "You wake up and the sun's shining and you can't wait to get to work. I'd like to say I miss the gales, the wind and rain of Glasgow. But I don't."

For all the stories in the papers about the influx of foreigners playing in the Premiership, there are still plenty of British players like Collins taking advantage of the Bosman ruling and playing abroad. Scott Minto won an FA Cup Winner's medal with Chelsea and promptly left for Benfica in Portugal. Irish international David Connolly quit Watford for Feyenoord and played against Manchester United in the European Champions League. Even Ireland striker Tony Cascarino has been rejuvenated by a spell with the unfortunately-named Nancy in France.

Until his recent move to Celtic, Scotland midfielder Paul Lambert was starring for Borussia Dortmund. Before Borussia beat Manchester in the European Champions League semi-final last season, Lambert said of his new team: "Borussia are certainly a dream team to me. How else can I describe what's happened to me? Only last season, I was trying to save Motherwell from relegation. Now, wherever I look around the team, I see great players." Lambert even won a European Champions League winners medal, and his bond with the supporters was so great that in his final game, he held a banner saying, "Thank you, Borussia fans for all your support".

TODAY'S SUCCESSFUL EXPORTS CAN learn from the examples of well-known British failures abroad like Ian Rush, Jimmy Greaves and Denis Law. It's never been easy playing overseas, and some of the local customs can seem bizarre. The England players discovered this in 1937, when they had to give a Nazi salute before a game with Hitler's Germany in Berlin. This was on the advice of the British ambassador, who would seem to have been advising the more bone-headed England fans ever since.

It wasn't until the '50s that British players had to grapple with unusual foreign customs again. The first really big move abroad came in 1957 when Leeds sold John Charles to Juventus. The Welshman became a legend in Turin by hitting more than 100 goals in his five seasons in Italy. In his first season, he led Juventus to the title and was the Championship's leading scorer with 28 goals in 32 games.

Charles' success encouraged Jimmy Greaves (£80,000) and Denis Law (£100,000) to succumb to the "lure of the lira" and join AC Milan then Turin in 1960-61. In that season, Joe Baker (£73,000) joined Law at Turin and Gerry Hitchens (£80,000) signed for Inter Milan. Greaves and Law should have known better. A Cockney with a penchant for the sauce and a Scottish lad done bad were always going to have problems with the monastic regime of Italian football.

Greaves and his wife Irene were soon homesick for their old home in Hornchurch, Essex. In 1961, Irene Greaves told the British press that the Italians had no idea how to make a decent cup of char "and the tea you buy here is awful". Mrs Greaves also complained that central heating was no substitute for a British coal fire, the shops shut for hours in the middle of the day , and you couldn't buy bacon. To be fair, Irene was just 21 and had a young baby, but even so, you can't imagine the Greaves being candidates to write the *Rough Guide To Italy*. Not that they didn't get support. At one point,we sent the ultimate English deterrent to sort out the Italians – Jimmy Hill, then chairman of the PFA. ✈

Mark Hughes found it all a Spain in the arse

FOREIGN PHRASE BOOK

Don't let Johnny Foreigner get the wrong end of the stick when you're playing abroad. Use loaded's pan-European phrasebook to dig yourself out of those embarrassing Continental faux pas...

Italian

"Dov'e Keegan's Bar?"
(Where could I find Keegan's Bar?)

"Quella ragazza ha la pesce bollente."
(That girl has a hot fish.)

"Caccati in mano e prenditi a schiaffi."
(Take a shit on your hands and hit yourself.)

"Vorrei noleggiare una vacca."
(I would like to hire a lustful woman.)

"Battere la strada tu se uno Tarzanello."
(Go and prostitute yourself you poo-ridden arse knot!)

"Centrocampista vuole sempre scopare di pecorina."
(Your midfield dynamo has fucked a small sheep.)

"Chiama un medico, sono assantanto."
(Call a doctor, I am possessed.)

French

"Combien pour le tes seins seulement?"
(How much for just the tits?)

"Je ne vais pas le faire avèc preservatif."
(I won't do it with a condom.)

"Ramoner!"
(Sweep my chimney!)

"Tu es canon!"
(You're hot stuff!)

"Je voudrais une caresse ton cul."
(I would like to stroke your arse.)

"Tombez sur les genoux et bahouer comme une chienne."
(Get on your knees and bark like a dog.)

"Ce putain là vole ma portefeuille!"
(That bitch stole my wallet!)

"Je m'adonne la marie-jeanne et elle plane."
(I'm addicted to grass and she is out of it.)

"Je ne savais pas que je n'avais pas le droit de le faire. C'est uniquement pour mon usage personnel."
(I didn't realise I was doing anything wrong. This is just for personal use.)

"When I'm not in the lake, I'm in the swamp."

Collins: "Ou est le cheese pasty?"

"I'll bang this one in then it's home for a pasty," says Greavsie

Greaves soon flew back home complaining of homesickness. Law and Baker (an Englishman brought up in Scotland) succumbed to similar problems; the club spies who would report any illicit nights out, the world's most intrusive press and the boredom of hotel living. They were also banned by the club from drinking in public – anathema to any Scottish footballer. At an away game in Venice, Law and Baker decided to take a stroll along the Grand Canal. Surrounded by paparazzi, Baker, in an incident that preceded similar Gazza antics by two decades, punched a photographer, grabbed his camera and threw it into the water. The watching Italian snappers loved it and the story was emblazoned all over the next day's front pages. After Law and his brother Joe smashed up an Alfa Romeo, there was further press furore and British comment about *La Dolce Vita* turning sour. Law started referring to his marble palace of flats as a prison, was taken off in a game for "not trying" and eventually transferred to Sir Matt Busby's Manchester United.

It seems that British players were the original Carlos Kickaballs. After the Law affair, an Italian league official said in 1962: "English players just seem to think they can go and collect a massive signing-on fee, go abroad for a few months and then put on all the pressure to come straight back again."

The flow to Italy stopped temporarily after the failures of Greaves and Law, but by the late '70s and '80s, nearly every top British player was sampling life in Italy, Spain, Germany or France. Kevin Keegan started the exodus when he went to Hamburg in 1977. The German side have a lot to answer for; at some point, Keegan's team-mate Ivan Buljan introduced him to two Yugoslavian pals who talked Keegan into making a record – the appalling 'Head Over Heels'. English players would take years to live it down.

After the Heysel riot of 1985, the ensuing ban meant our top players could only play in European competition if they moved abroad. Gary Lineker went to Barcelona in 1986 and was a tremendous success after assimilating the local culture, learning the language and proving to everyone that his farts really did smell of perfume. In contrast, his team-mate Mark Hughes never really wanted to leave Manchester United and admitted to being so depressed before his departure that he took to boozing. He was only 22 and unable to use the physical side of his game in front of intolerant Spanish referees. He soon found his way back to Old Trafford.

Virtually every top British star played a few seasons abroad. Ray Wilkins went to AC Milan and Paris St Germain, Graeme Souness and Trevor Francis went to Sampdoria, Paul Rideout to Bari, and Glenn Hoddle and Mark Hateley prospered at Monaco. One of the lesser-known successes was Michael Robinson playing for Osasuna in Spain; the former Brighton and Liverpool striker quickly became fluent in Spanish and went on to present a Spanish TV show. Chris Waddle then moved to Marseilles for £4.5 million in 1989 and was such a success that Barry Davies once commented that "even his shrugs now seem Gallic". Waddle adapted well, after an initial shock. His team-mate Jean-Pierre Papin, who spoke good English, was delegated to look after him. Unfortunately Papin was prone to driving at 100mph along the seafront with his pet poodle. The poor dog was so terrifed by Papin's driving that it promptly shat itself – while perched on Waddle's lap.

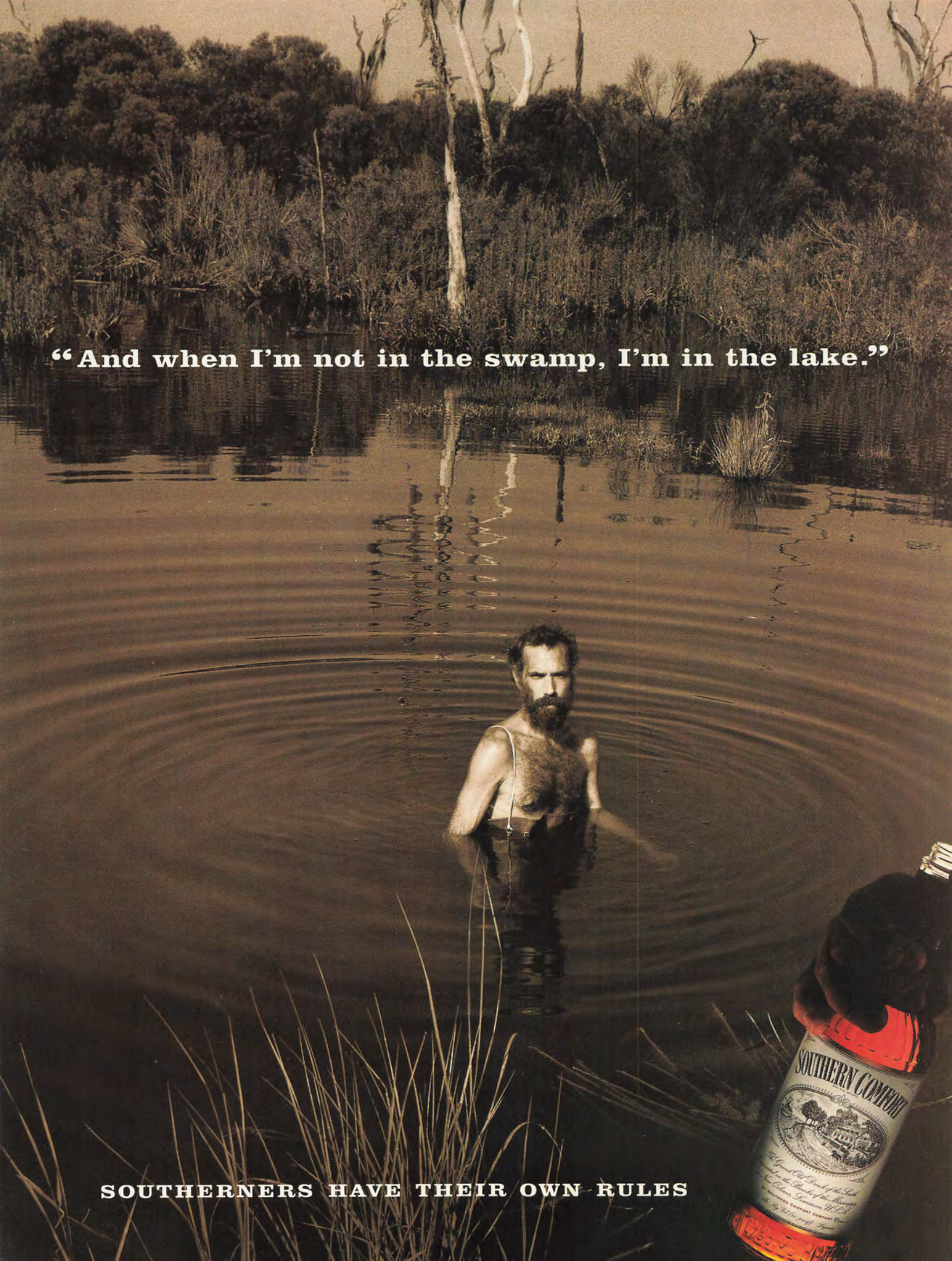
When asked if he had a message for the Norwegians, Gascoigne infamously replied "Fk off Norway"**

The last generation of big names to move to Italy included Paul Gascoigne, who finally moved to Lazio in 1992, David Platt (doing a one-man tour of Serie A, joining Bari for £5.5 in 1991, Juventus for £6.5 million in 1992 and then Sampdoria for £5.2 million in 1993), and Paul Ince who decided to go off to Inter Milan in 1995.

Playing abroad inspired many would-be managers. When managing Liverpool, Graeme Souness complained that in England the football culture "was of lager and the disco", whereas in Italy the players would have a quiet meal after the match with the odd glass of wine. Souness did go a bit too far when managing Galatasary in Turkey, however. He embraced the local football culture by plonking his side's flag on the centre of the opposition's pitch after Galatasary had won the Cup, and nearly started a riot.

Fulham's manager Ray Wilkins became a summariser on Channel 4, finding much that was "super" and "smashing" about live Italian matches. England boss Glenn Hoddle expanded his ✈

Keegan's perm: Heavy Suds Vehicle


"And when I'm not in the swamp, I'm in the lake."
SOUTHERN COMFORT
SOUTHERNERS HAVE THEIR OWN RULES

"Wayaye lads, er... uno goolio... er, cheese pasty per favore?"

soccer education in Monaco too, swapping the long ball game of the '80s English First Division for the intellectual guidance and diamond formations of Arsène Wenger.

But not everyone took to the new regime. While at Lazio, Gazza did his best to baffle the sports nutritionists: "The doctor at Lazio told me I should try drinking wine because it would be good for me. When I did, he took one look at me and said, 'You'd better go back to beer.'"

Undoubtedly, British players can still learn a lot from the continental approach. John Collins was amazed by French thoroughness: "It was unbelievable; I'd never seen anything like it in Scotland." He was given a blood test to check what vitamins and minerals he required and put on a treadmill to check his respiration, while a computer assessed which of his muscles needed building up. Youth development in France is better too, says Collins. "They get 40 kids from the age of 14 and train them with special coaches. They're reaping the rewards with players like Zidane, Djorkaeff, Viera and Deschamps."

But inevitably, some British players fail to adapt to new ways. Jamie Pollock moved from Middlesbrough to Osasuna in Spain last summer and told *When Saturday Comes*: "The trouble with me is that I'm a fat bastard". He explained that he'd come to Spain for the discipline. But after an unhappy four months, he was evidently still hankering after his pints and promptly moved on to exotic Bolton.

Players moving abroad today should learn from the culture shocks suffered by the stars of the '80s. You're used to simply telling Motto how the ball came over and you just stuck it in, like, and then you find yourself on a barge with an Italian TV crew demanding to know your thoughts on the arts. Ian Rush, who's always been more Phil Collins than Verdi, was bemused by the questions fired at him by the Italian media when he signed for Juventus in 1987. They asked him for his views on Margaret Thatcher, if he would have fought in the Falklands War, what he thought of Charles and Diana's marital problems, and his opinions on Italian cuisine, religion and the merits of English and Italian literature.

"Rush goalie!"

Rush admits his big mistake was not learning the language first; he bought some language tapes for his car while he was still at Liverpool, "but after a few minutes, I'd get bored and put on some music instead". A bit of basic etiquette helps, too; it's best not to belch or swear in front of them, as Paul Gascoigne discovered. He belched into a microphone when asked for a comment and the country was so outraged that questions were asked in the Italian parliament about the incident. It's also best not to try to impress your new team-mates with examples of Anglo-Saxon wit; when asked by a Norwegian TV crew if he had a message for their home country, Gazza infamously replied, "Fuck off, Norway."

At least the Lazio fans tried to make Gazza feel at home when he arrived by assimilating some English culture and hoisting a huge celebratory banner reading "Gazza's boys are here, shag women, drink beer." But, after some poor performances, a later banner read, "Paul Gascoigne you are a big poofter."

Gazza did try to become more cultured in Rome. England's answer to the Renaissance Man wrote a poem before Lazio's derby with AS Roma that included the legendary lines: "When we are together/We will be the best/We will take on Rome/And the fucking rest/Then we'll take on Juve/Sampdoria, Napoli too/We will shit on all of them/Especially that Roma crew." Wayaye, that Ted Hughes was a soft southern bastard, man.

And don't look worried if some geezer starts murdering a sheep in the players' tunnel. Spurs' Les Ferdinand played in Turkey for Besiktas. Local custom dictated that a lamb was slaughtered before the game for good luck. The blood was then smeared on Ferdinand's boots and forehead. Dripping with sheep gore, he was given a lucky pigeon to release on the pitch. But Ferdinand was holding the pigeon too tightly and its wings stuck together. He threw it and it fell straight back to earth. The stadium went silent. Les threw the bird again and the same thing happened. Luckily, on the third time, the pigeon flew away. There was a massive cheer. "It was like scoring a goal at Wembley," says Ferdinand. Still, Les wasn't the first or last British footballer to have trouble with dodgy foreign birds. ◧

Pete May is the co-author of The Lad Done Bad *(Penguin, £9.99) a history of sex sleaze and scandal in English football.*

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NEAARRRG

GH!

Tackling the issues that matter head on, this month loaded examines the miserable world of pain

cartoons by MICK

KISS OF DEATH

Pain, like love, is something of a swindle. No matter how much either of them hurts, for better or for worse, you can never quite recapture the feeling. Whilst there are obvious biological reasons for this, that doesn't stop us wanting to, which is where self-mutilation, drugs and other messy stuff comes in.

One brush with agony that remains unhappily vivid in the memory took place some years ago at a gig. For a number of reasons, I had become completely immobile, hardly a quantum leap from my normal state of inactivity at the time, but, nevertheless, immobile, static, paralytic, fucked. Situated beneath a table I was feeling fine, thinking I had really done it this time. I was conscious, I was happy, but I couldn't even move my eyes. OK for me perhaps, but to the untrained eyes of some of my associates, something altogether different was happening. I was dead.

It's nice that people care. Indeed, it could probably be argued by some that, if I allowed myself to get into that state, I didn't deserve to be alive anyway. Anyway, I was. Which is why I was distressed when they started giving me the kiss of life.

An unwanted injection of stale drunkard's breath into your system is bad news at the best of times, ask any woman. But when you can't fight back, signal your conciousness or your displeasure, and they're blowing you up like a tyre, the exact sensation is difficult to recall, but there was a sense of drowning in air and the distinct feeling that my lungs were about to tear and explode. Each inflation was followed by a swift blow of cardiac massage. They were killing me.

The pain itself was something to be reckoned with, but the inablity to express it was something else entirely. Worse even. And then it stopped; they got distracted, spotting an unattended drink perhaps, and let me drop back onto the carpet. I stayed there for a while, partly in shock but glad to be alive, before eventually rising, resolving to go private in future, and heading for the bar.

MICHAEL HOLDEN

INSIDES OUT

Water, water, everywhere, and not a drop to drink. Well, actually, it was a case of just a drop *too much* to drink and blood, blood, BLOOD everywhere. Blood squirting from every one of my realistic vibrating orifices. Blood all over my limited edition Take That duvet cover. Nasty.

It hardly seemed fair. All I did was have a social jar or two. Well, I might have had three. OK, OK, so I'd been drinking for three months straight. Nothing wrong with that. A swift half never hurt anyone. Unfortunately, it seems that in my fun-loving, happy-go-lucky, pigeon-fancying, Ecky Thump, Ilkley Moor baht 'at, bitter-Nazi Northern stupidity, I had completely eroded the lining of my stomach and it had collapsed in on itself. Bad one.

I was alerted to my predicament when I woke up on the morning after the weekend before (Friday: my birthday; Saturday: my flatmate's birthday; Sunday: Stan Boardman at the Top Rank bingo) and instantly began projectile-vomiting blood all over Gary Barlow's face. I couldn't lie down, couldn't stand up, couldn't kneel. It even hurt to groan. And I was doing a fair bit of that.

I was so crippled with pain I couldn't even reach for the phone, not that it'd have done me any good.

999 bird: "Emergency. Which service do you require?"

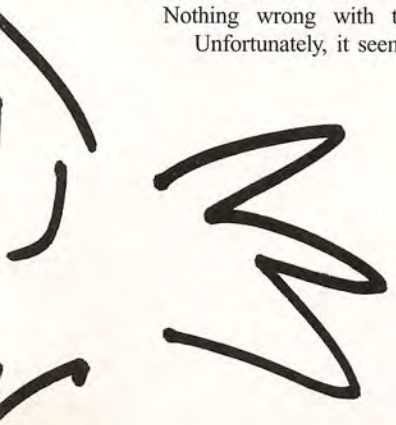
Me: "Uuuuhhhhgggghhh…!"

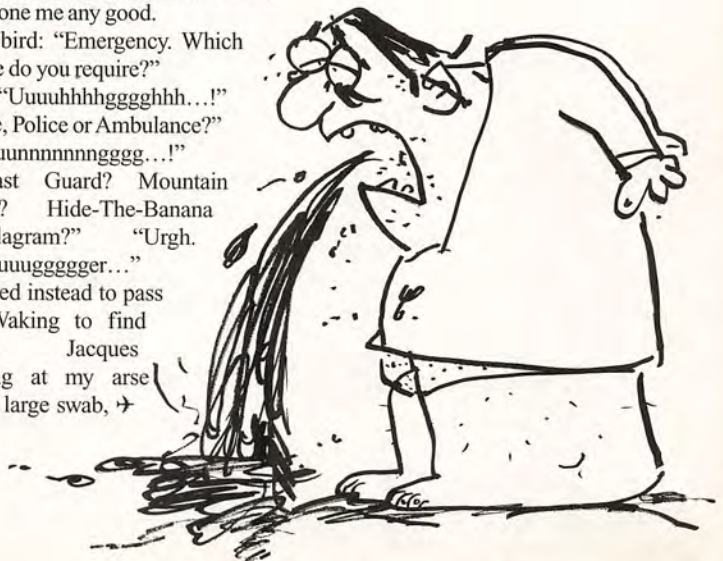
"Fire, Police or Ambulance?"

"Uuuunnnnnnnggggg…!"

"Coast Guard? Mountain rescue? Hide-The-Banana Gorrillagram?" "Urgh. Yerrrbuuuggggger…"

I opted instead to pass out. Waking to find Hattie Jacques dabbing at my arse with a large swab, ✈





I had time and painkillers enough to reflect on the many lessons to be learnt. One, I really *do* have a limit. Two, you really must get your bloodstained boyband bedlinen in the Biotex straight away. And three, all doctors are cunts. If you've got a stethoscope around your neck and a cupboard full of smack, it seems you are obliged to treat drinking as slightly more dangerous than sticking your head into a combine harvester. Talking to the self-righteous Thalidomide-peddlers was like being called before the headmaster for messing about with the school javelin.

"Mr Perry," they scolded, "your wantonly excessive drinking has rendered your stomach utterly useless."

"Is that bad?" I asked.

"Yes. You need a stomach. It's very important."

"Really? Couldn't I just do without it?"

"No. Food and so forth. That's where it goes. In your stomach. But if you put any more booze in there," they warned sternly, "you'll die."

"Is *that* bad?"

As it turned out, it was. I was forced to give up drinking for two months. And the misery of pining for my One True Love was far worse than any blood-spurting stomach cramps. Parting a man and his ale; now that's *real* pain.

JOHN PERRY

MAX FRACTURE

On the final night of my first year at University, I snuck out of the boozer just before last orders. I needed to retrieve my stash which I'd hidden precariously inside a *Rocky IV* video in my hall of residence common room. I'd lost my front door keys, but I was going to get in via a bathroom window on the top floor which I'd left open. I could easily shin up the guttering and slip in. Ten pints later, with me wobbling down the road like a fat weeble, the plan still seemed kid simple. I'd break in and, for a golden half-hour before the rabble turned up, sit back in front of some vintage Stallone and have a nice smoke.

As the rain started to fall in sheets and visibility dropped to nothing, I started to climb slowly and, reaching the top of the guttering, climbed off onto the window ledge. I pulled firmly on the bottom of the frame but some donkey had locked it. Yanking hard I slipped backwards from the ledge. For a few seconds I hung in the glow of a street lamp with the rain falling around me, my legs spinning like Wyle E Coyote; 19 feet later my teeth smashed together as my head hit the concrete floor at the bottom of the wall. Pissed and dizzy I rolled onto my back and, realising my arms were useless, stumbled down to the end of the garden to summon some help from the road, falling over the wall and diving head first into the pavement. Somehow I made it to a local hotel. It was there, waiting for an ambulance, that I realised my wrist was dangling from the end of my left arm. When the ambulance came they filled me full of gas and air, but, over the next few hours, that and the booze wore off and every nerve ending in my body began to vibrate and grind.

For weeks my wrists screamed with pain. As the bones healed, I became convinced that ants were crawling around under the plaster, gnawing into my skin. Worse still, with both arms in plaster, I couldn't wipe or wank and had a permanently itchy arse for eight weeks. Sexual satisfaction and relief from the pain only came when a nice nurse would grease up her finger and stick a suppository up my arse. I'd try to clench down on it, but she'd always whip her hand away in time. I felt low.

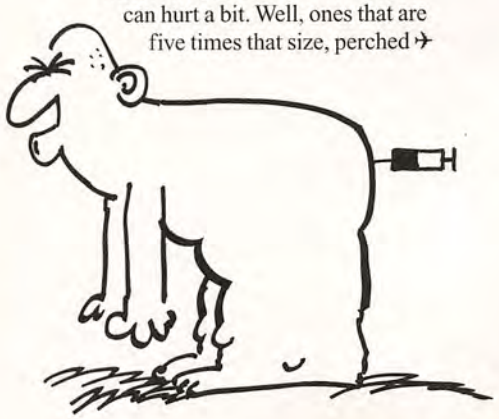
On leaving the hospital I realised they'd set my left arm like John Inman. I was walking down the shops, my face twisted with agony, while builders whistled at me for walking like a fairy. Sometimes I'd tear through the crowds like the Elephant Man, sobbing from the pain and humiliation. Still, the final insult was to come on the day I was due to have the plaster off. An X-ray showed that my left arm was set like a greyhound's leg and they told me that they'd have to break it and set it again. Another six weeks of shit. That was a really bad day.

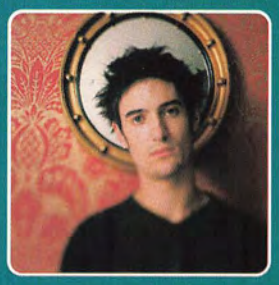
PHIL ROBINSON

DANNY BOIL

It started as a small lump just at the top of the cleft of my arse. Nothing much. Just a small, hard lump. Not the sort of thing you mention to a doctor, given its position. Anyway, it had been sitting there not doing much for a few months when it started to grow. Not worth going to a doctor, though. Then it started to grow a bit more. A lump the size of a marble roundabout where the pants come up to on a motorway labourer. Bending over began to hurt a bit then. Must be an inflamed nerve or something, I thought to myself. Nothing to bother a doctor about. But of course the little bastard kept growing. As it grew bigger, walking became a bit of a chore. Oh well, maybe it'll just go away, I thought. It didn't. By the time, this lump had got to the size of a ping-pong ball, I realised something was up. I couldn't move without being in ridiculous pain. Getting to the doctor's was agony. I had to walk very, very slowly up Stoke Newington Church Street, like one of those old fellas who turn a journey to the corner shop into a day trip.

After inspecting my arse, the doctor put me on antibiotics and told me that I had a huge abscess, full of pus. My affliction was named Jeep's Disease after it laid low hundreds of American GIs who'd spent too long bouncing around on hard Jeep seats. The result of a hair being forced to grow inwards and infect its own follicle, I'd managed to get it by doing too many sit-ups on wooden floors. If you've ever had a common or garden boil on your face or wherever, you'll know that these can hurt a bit. Well, ones that are five times that size, perched ✈





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FOOTLOOSE

I dropped a 100-watt bass speaker cabinet on my toe in a pub in Melton Mowbray, 10 minutes before we were due to play some racket at a bloke and his dog. It was one of a home-made pair I'd bought from a bloke in Ilkley. They looked like squat Satanic fridges with a lining of concrete in their bases and huge metal strips all the way round. Rubbish. Each one weighed about the same as a densely compressed Mini.

So there we were, unloading these fuckers from the back of the transit. Alan took the light end and we staggered in semi-darkness across the pub's gravel car park. Oof, oof. Each step was like an astronaut's first on a lunar surface. Oof, oof. We'd got about 10 yards when Alan started pulling faster and faster to get the job over with. One step too far, too fast and the bastard great box was pulled clean from my grasp and smashed down with a grinding thunk. Thinking quickly, I managed to stop the box damaging the gravel path by slipping my foot underneath to soften the impact.

Alan looked at me and I looked at him. He looked down at my foot, trapped under the cabinet. I looked down at my foot. I couldn't see much in the dark but it felt all warm and strange, like it wasn't quite part of me. "Right," said Alan, "I'll call an ambulance then." "Yep, that's probably best," I said, starting to feel dizzy. Would he like to help ease this thing off me foot first? He did, and then the pain struck like a bolt of electricity up my leg and I went cold and hot at the same time. My right shoe was ripped clean across the top and was hanging off like a flapping tongue.

Upon taking my shoe off, I noticed that I had the peculiar sensation of feeling a large weight moving inside my sock. It was warm and wet and sort of spongey. My big toe, the one that I was used to seeing about two inches long and fully under the control of my body, was now completely flat in the middle, and the end bit just wobbled in the wind. I would be, I remember thinking, like an amputee Vietnam vet. I'd probably have to scoot around on a trolley for the rest of my life. This toe was no longer part of my body. To all intents and purposes it wasn't mine to muck about with any more. "Christ almighty," said Alan, and ran away.

I had to have four operations to save my toe, which had been broken clean in half. I was in plaster for seven months all the way up to my shin. I had to crawl about indoors on my hands and knees like a dog or walk with two sticks when I went out. It ruined a whole year of my life. To this day, it rattles like a pea in a soft glove, and the nail is beautiful, the best one I've got by far, but twice as thick as it needs to be. The bone is about four times thicker, like a busted underground sewer pipe, and I have to take a half-size smaller on my right foot.

MICK BUNNAGE

between two of the largest muscles in your body, are indescribably painful. The doctor told me to take the strongest painkillers I could find and lie around until my arse went down. Problem was, I had a mad-for-it mate just returned from Thailand coming over for the weekend. Taking advantage of my predicament, he decided, inspired by a half bottle of Jack, to drag me around by my legs.

Still, at least after that experience, my abscess started to seep. I took this as another signal I should go to the doctor. After a close inspection of my disgusting rear end, the doctor said he'd decided to lance it. Oh no you don't, you fucker. I had visions of a large spike, my now golf ball-sized extra buttock and a sea of blood and pus. There was no arguing with him, though. He sprayed it with some cold stuff, whipped out a scalpel, made a small incision and bloody hell!!! There are few things that smell as bad as pus, maybe a three-week-old massacre scene in equatorial Africa or the bins outside a Brazilian meat factory.

It continued to seep for about a day after that, and with every bit that came out the pain, subsided that little bit more. Sweet relief. Finally able to walk to the pub after five days, I was in a very volatile state. Perhaps that's why I wound up the girl I was with so much that she kicked me in the arse.

DANNY PLUNKETT

FIRE AT WILLY

How it got there is anyone's guess. The sort of mystery that would tax the collective brain power of Sherlock Holmes, Inspector Morse and Slipper of the Yard. All I know is that I woke up one morning in the summer of 1987, and there it was. A fucking great wart on my bell-end.

Clearly something had to be done. First port of call was my local GP who didn't even have the common decency to conceal his amusement at my dire predicament. After much humming and hawing, not to mention open guffawing, he decided that this was a job for a specialist. The following morning, I found myself walking through the doors of a red-brick clinic in the Goodge Street area of London, feeling as jumpy as a kitten on a hot-plate. Still, I reasoned, they've put a man on the Moon – by this stage in the game, they must have got round to devising a simple, painless method of removing virus-induced lumps of skin from the end of one's dilly-dangler. Which just shows how wrong a man can be.

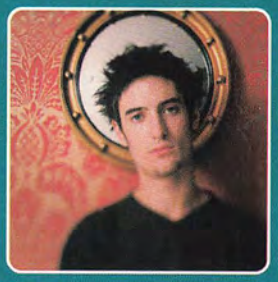
Without delay, I was led into a small bleached room and handed over into the care of a hairy-nostrilled Scotsman wearing a sherbet-green shirt. Most unsettling. Though not half as unsettling as having to remove my trousers and allow this complete stranger to squat down and look my pork sword square in the Jap's eye. Gripping it between thumb and forefinger, he eyeballed the offending lump with concern.

Now Sod's Law has it that a fella's pecker will often decide to lie low when it's most needed – and will opt to stand bolt upright just when it's most inconvenient. Which is exactly what happened on this occasion. Taking my cue from the geezer in Dennis Potter's *The Singing Detective* who found himself in a similar tight spot with an attractive nurse in attendance, I attempted to let the air out of my tyre by bringing to mind a list of the most boring things in life; test cricket, Melvyn Bragg, Sting's music. Then I was pulled up short by the syringe in the doctor's hand – which came complete with a six-inch needle. A thoroughly nasty-looking implement which, without warning, was raised in the air and plunged with double-barrelled force straight through the aforementioned Jap's eye.

When I finally regained consciousness, the quack was standing over me, grinning like a cat which has just discovered it's got a cream-flavoured arsehole. "Hurt, did it?" he beamed. "Just a bit," I murmured. "Can I go now?" "Go?" he replied in a shrill voice. "Go? We've only just started. The needle was just to numb the pain. And now for my next trick…" At which point, he pulled from his cupboard what can only be described as a miniature blowtorch. Then, gripping my trouser snake firmly in his fist, he aimed the torch in the general direction of the wart and started blasting away. As I leapt into the air, the scalding pain was felt in every last cell of my body. Landing with a bump, I heard him say, "Just missed the bugger that time. One more blast should do it." And I was out of there quicker than shit through a blue goose.

As for the wart? It might have dropped off at a later date. Or it might still be there for all I know. Because the truth is that, with that blistering pain still fresh in the memory, I haven't dared look behind my foreskin since Coventry last won the FA Cup.

JON WILDE



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loaded fashion

edited by BETH SUMMERS

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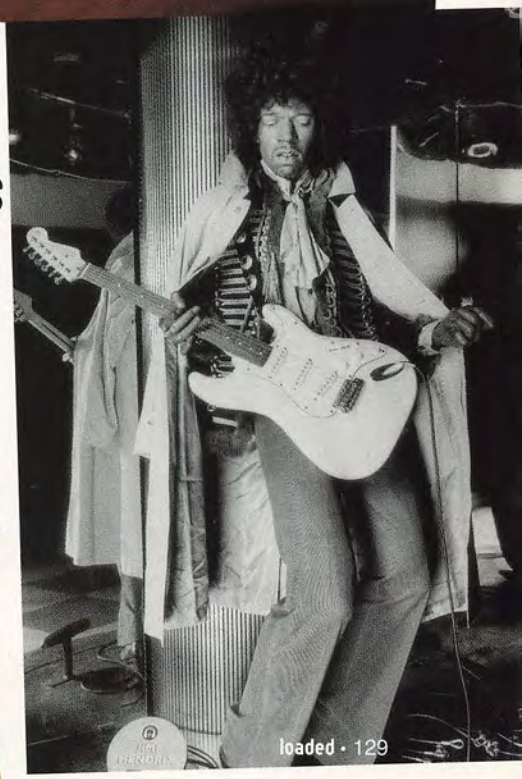
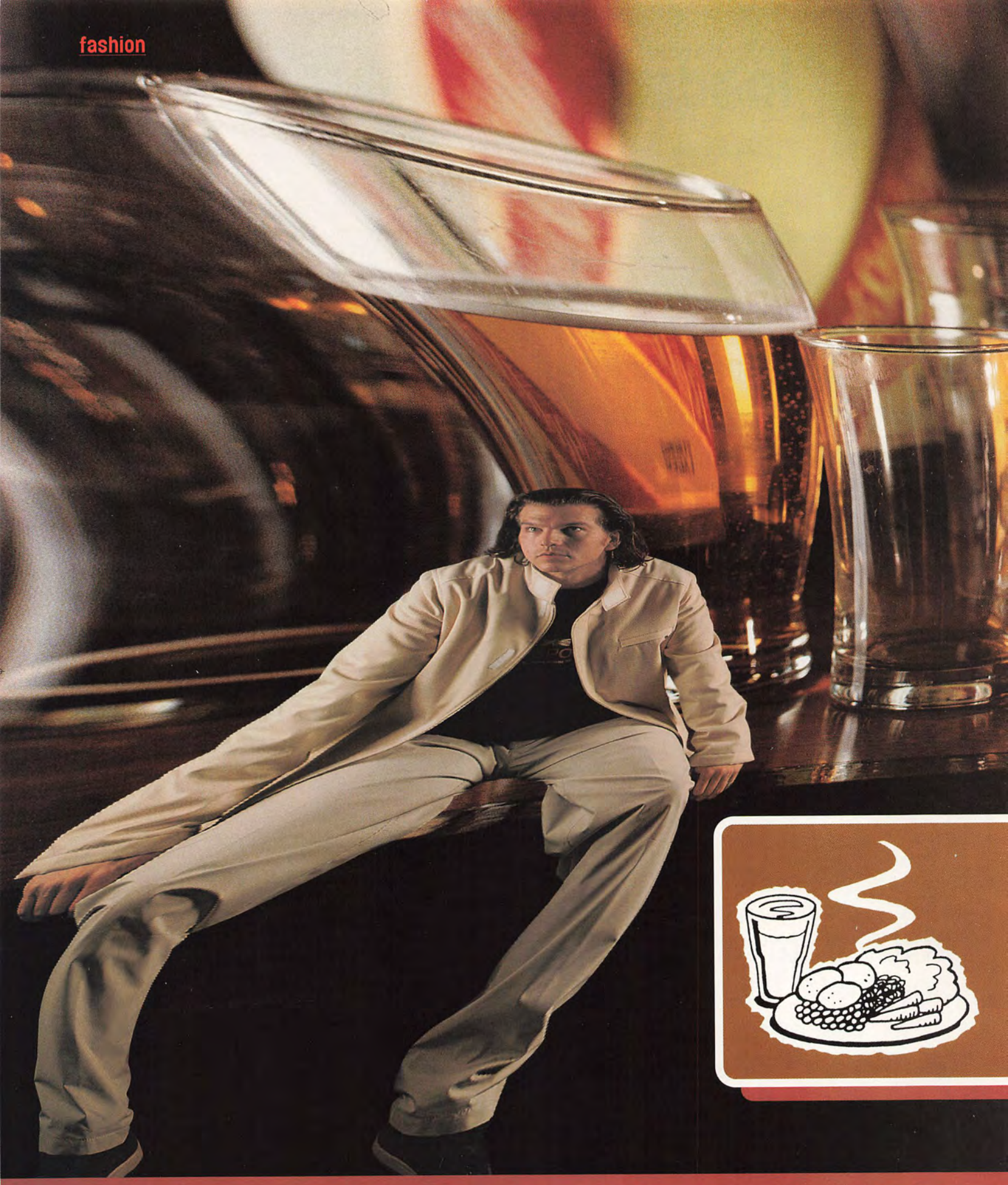
p154-158 **Accessories:** Boys and their toys. Gadgets, ID bracelets and stuff.

p160 **Stockists enquiries:** Where to find all this gear. Like in a shop, for example.





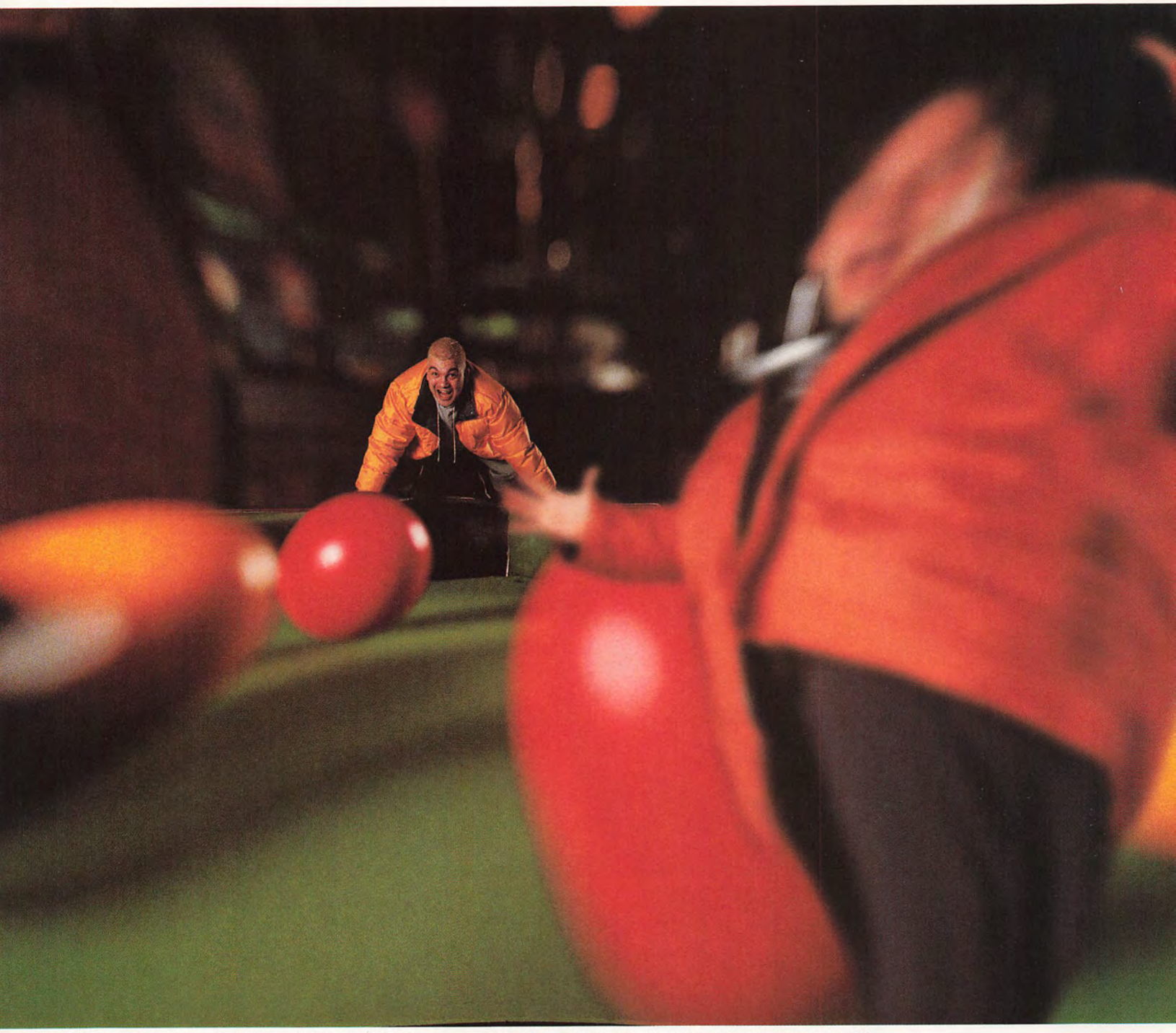
Track record? Ten rounds with Carling. Sports gear

MODELS: LEE, COLIN, DAVID AND PAUL. THANKS TO THE ANCHOR & HOPE PUBLIC HOUSE

"The SUNDAY LUNCH THAT TIME FORGOT!"

story by LONE PARENT & TONTO
photography/styling BETH SUMMERS
photographic technician NICKY EMMERSON

and men playing a game with more than two halfs... barp



Opening Spread – Cream Jacket £310 and cream trousers £165 by Prada, black T-shirt £35 by Burberry Sport and brown 'Alpine' trainers £69 by Duffs.
Orange fleece zipped jumper £115, white & blue puff jacket £520 and grey tracksuit bottoms £85 all by Polo Ralph Lauren, navy/white trainers £49.99 by Nike.
Red fleece £55 and orange puff jacket £185 both by Burberry Sport. Bondage pants £125 by Sharpeye and navy trainers £75 by Duffs.

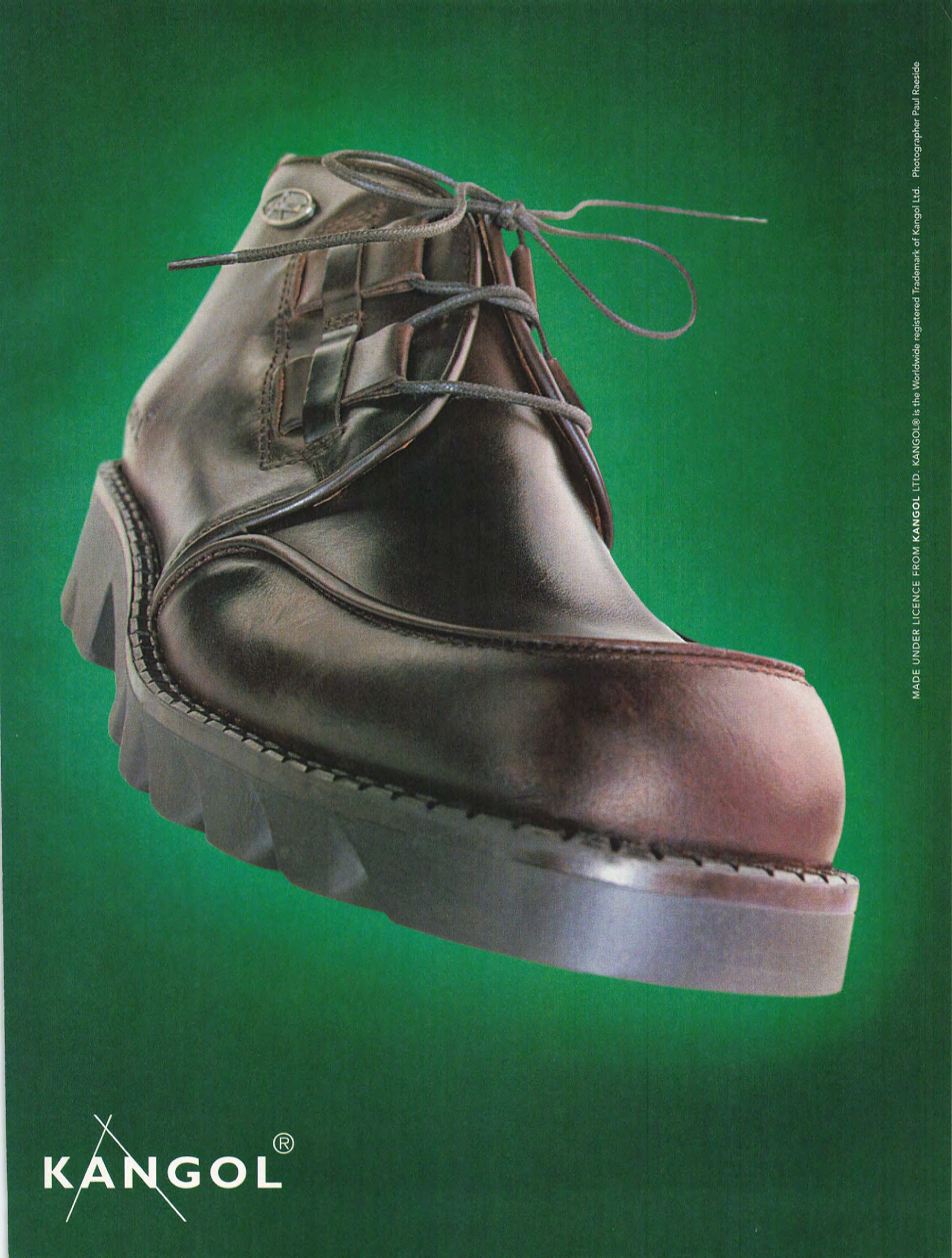
Above – Grey hooded top £115 by Versace Sport, yellow and black reversible jacket £80 by Atlantic Sport at Burton, mesh pouch pants £125 by Sharpeye.
Navy 'USA' sweatshirt £59 by DKNY and orange waterproof jacket with fur-lined hood £585 by Zegna Sport.

Red v-neck knit with black/white stripes £35, stone jacket with black fleece lining £60 and navy jogging pants £18 all by Atlantic Sport at Burton, navy jeans £75 and olive waterproof jacket £295 both by Zegna Sport.

Green wool roll neck £145 and green jacket £340 both by Prada,
vintage jeans £99 by Holmes and white-red/blue split stripe trainers £50 by Reebok, yellow watch £199.50 by Festina

Black nylon trousers £115 by Polo Sport and red waterproof Packamac £95 by Polo Jeans Co.

Red logo sweatshirt £24.99, grey marl jogging shorts £14.99 and black and grey v-neck sweat £19.99 all by NX Sport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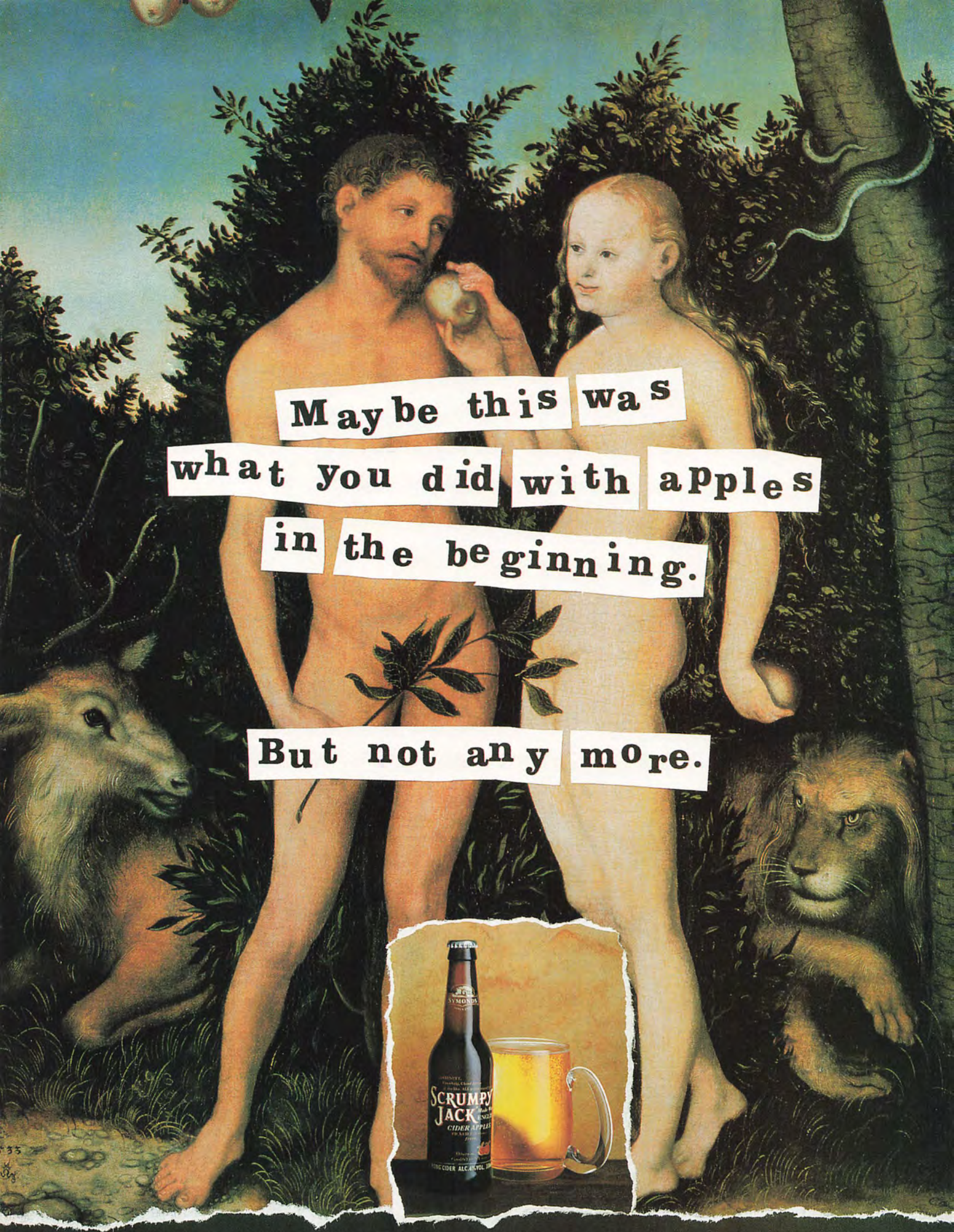

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photos by BETH SUMMERS
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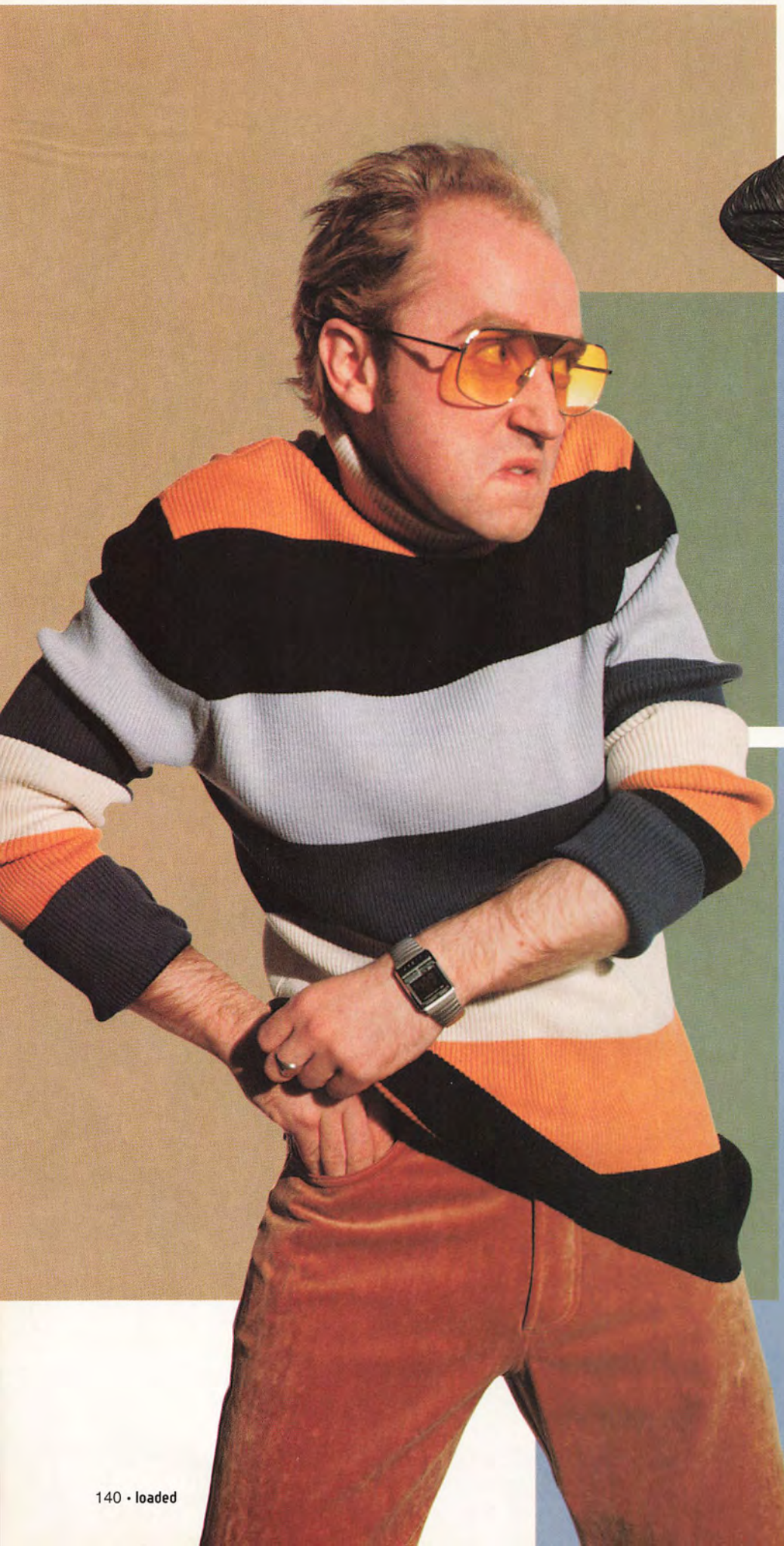
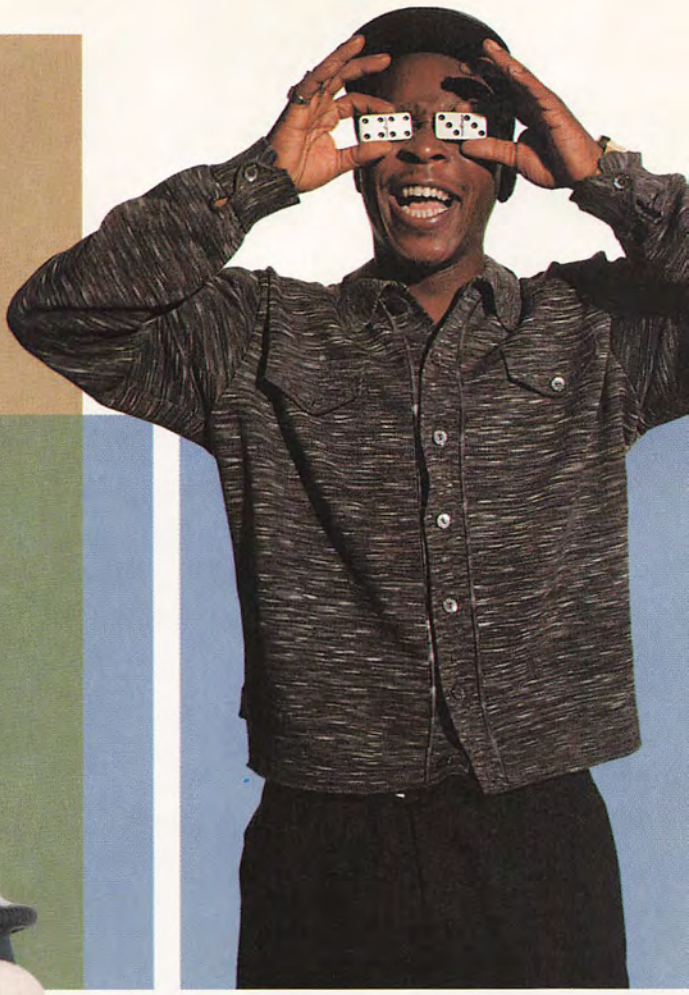
LEFT: LIME GREEN ZIP CARDIGAN £169 BY PAUL SMITH **BLACK ZIP ROLL NECK** £199 BY HUGO **BLACK SUNGLASSES** £109 BY CUTLER & GROSS **HAT** MODEL'S OWN

RIGHT: PALE BLUE KNIT WITH SIDE ZIP £145 BY HUGO **BLUE CARDIGAN** £199 BY NICOLE FARHI **HOUNDSTOOTH CHECK TROUSERS** £45 BY FARAH

KNITS

Get up to scratch in yardies' cardies and preppie pullovers

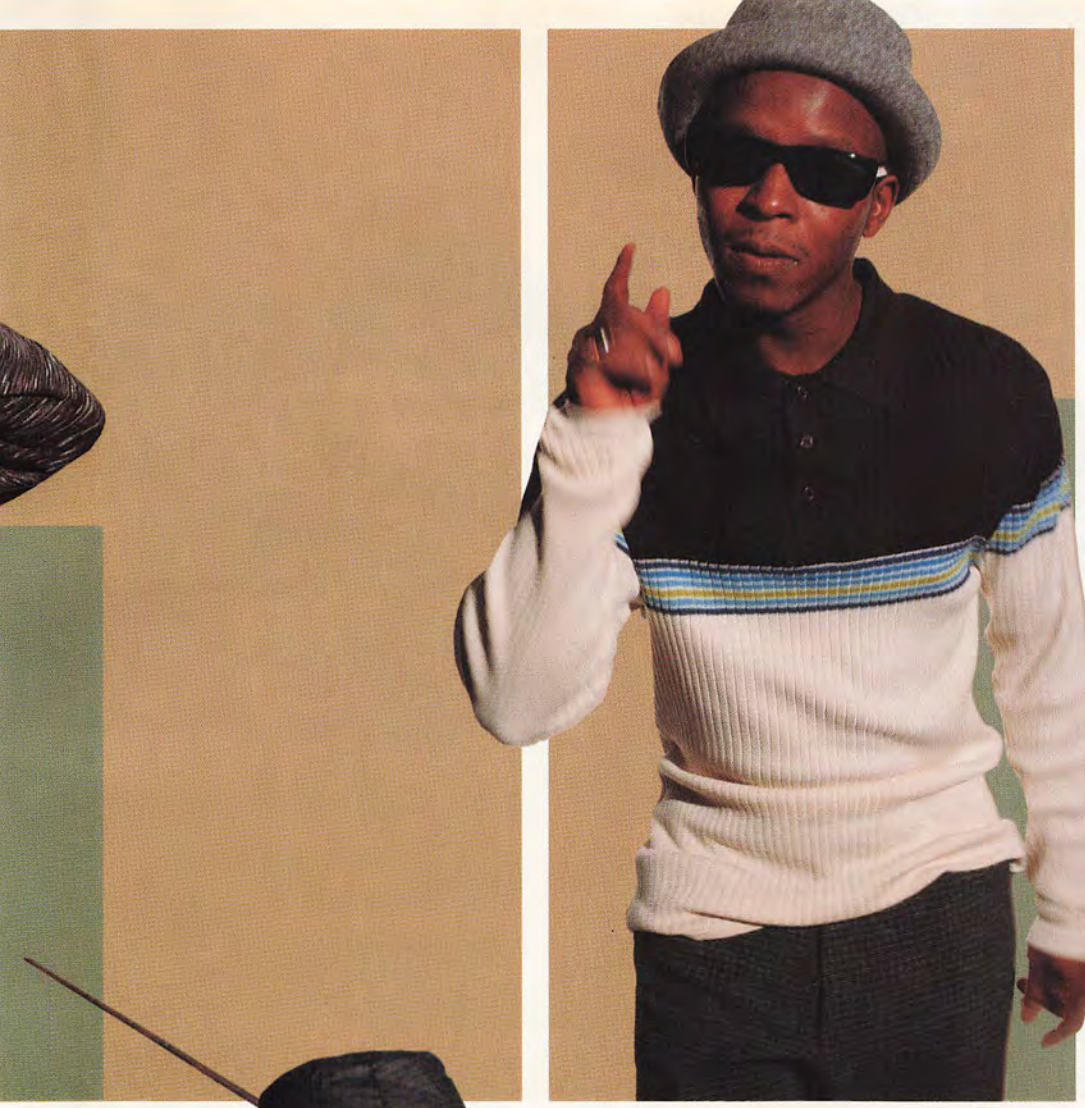


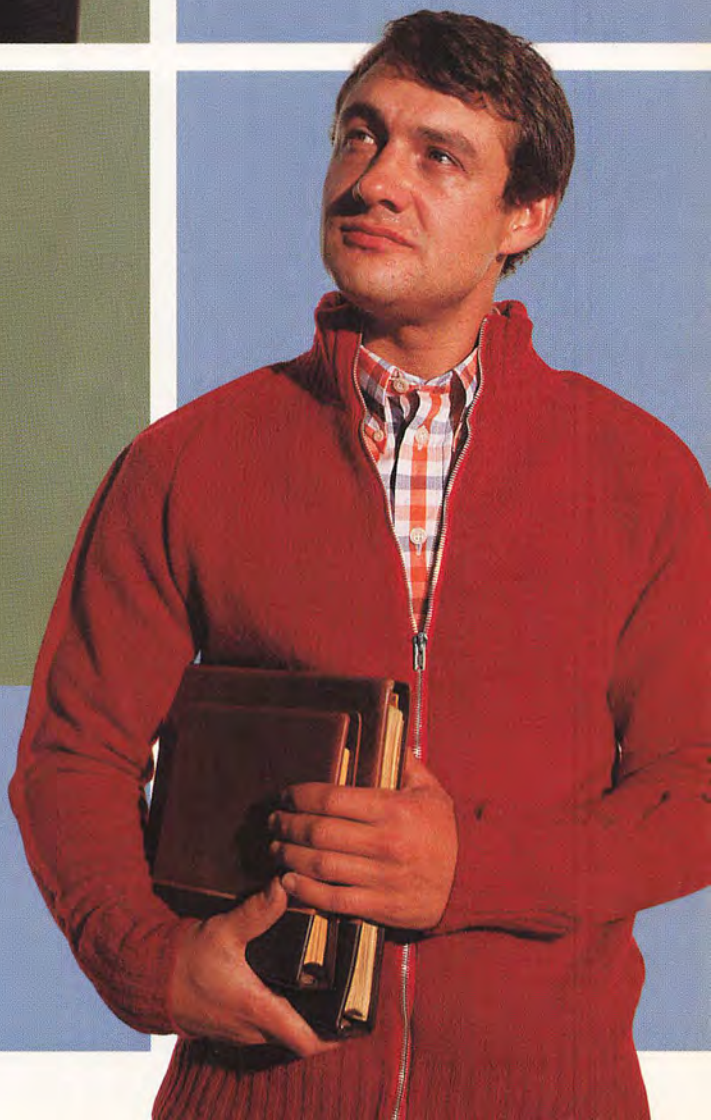


ABOVE: GREY MARL WOOL POCKET JACKET £159 BY ARMAND BASI **CHARCOAL GREY TROUSERS** FROM £89 BY TOMMY HILFIGER **GOLD WATCH** £285 BY PAUL SMITH

LEFT: STRIPED ORANGE, BLUE AND WHITE ROLL NECK £65 BY FRENCH CONNECTION **ORANGE/BRONZE COTTON JEANS** £99 BY NICOLE FARHI **URBAN EQUIPMENT SUNGLASSES** MODEL'S OWN

BELOW: NAVY DIAMOND CREW NECK KNIT £65 BY HOLMES **OCHRE BUTTON-DOWN SHIRT** £69 BY HUGO **BROWN FADING TINTED GLASSES** £112 BY CALVIN KLEIN

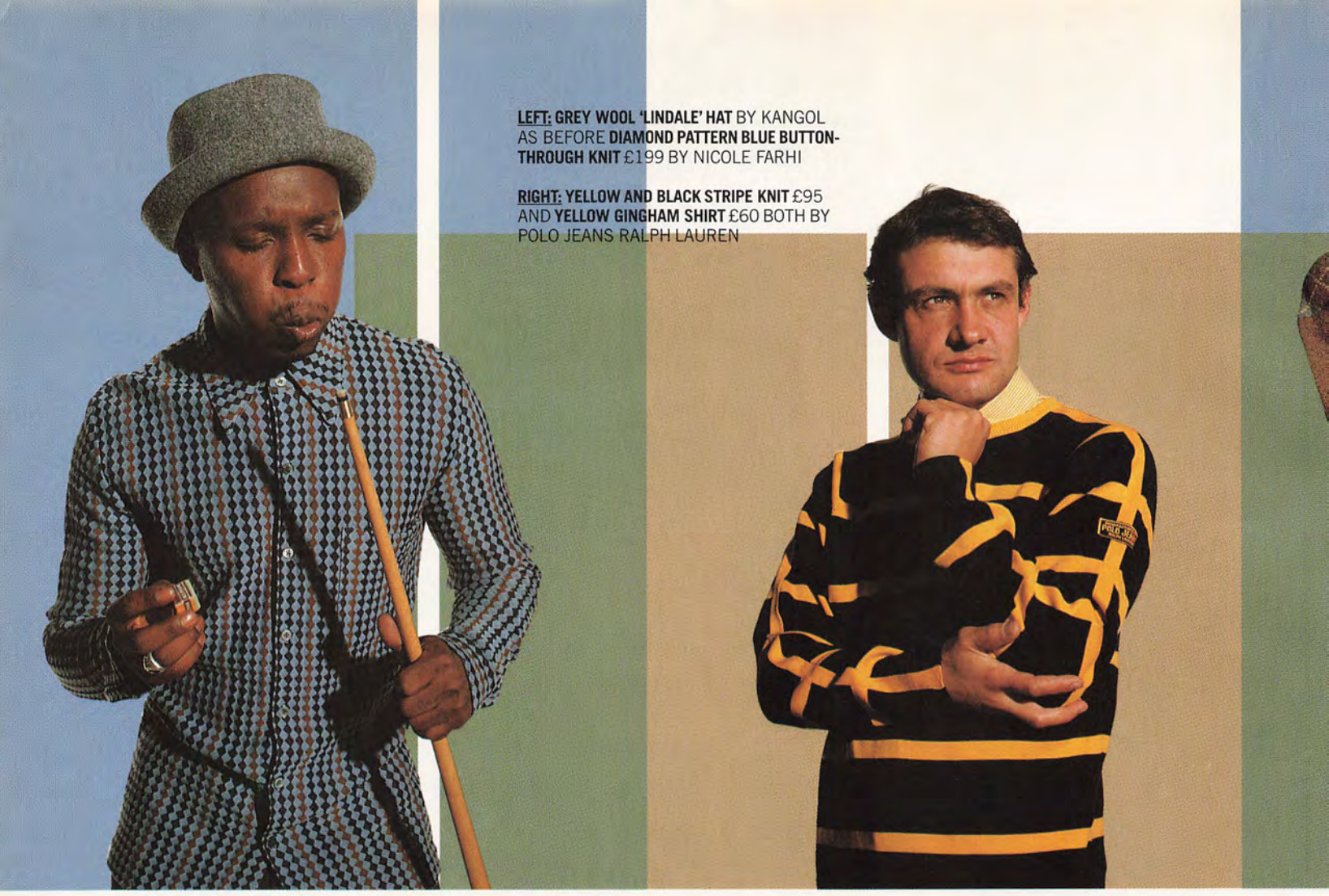




LEFT: GREY WOOL 'LINDALE' HAT £34.50 BY KANGOL **BLACK AND WHITE RIBBED POLO TOP** £70 BY FRENCH CONNECTION **BLUE/GREEN PUPPY TOOTH CHECK TROUSERS** £149 BY HUGO **BLACK PLASTIC SUNGLASSES** £109 BY CUTLER & GROSS

BELOW LEFT: BLUE AND GREEN CHECK SHOWER-PROOF HAT £24 BY KANGOL **SALMON COLOURED STRIPED V-NECK** £70 BY GABICCI GOLF **CREAM ROLL NECK** £65 BY JOHN SMEDLEY **HOUNDSTOOTH CHECK TROUSERS** £45 BY FARAH

BELOW: RED 'SHIELD' CARDIGAN £100 BY YMC **ORANGE, WHITE AND BLUE SHIRT** £40 BY BEN SHERMAN



LEFT: GREY WOOL 'LINDALE' HAT BY KANGOL AS BEFORE **DIAMOND PATTERN BLUE BUTTON-THROUGH KNIT** £199 BY NICOLE FARHI

RIGHT: YELLOW AND BLACK STRIPE KNIT £95 AND **YELLOW GINGHAM SHIRT** £60 BOTH BY POLO JEANS RALPH LAUREN

LEFT: NAVY KNITTED WAISTCOAT £99 BY HUGO **SKY BLUE POLO SHIRT** £49 BY HACKETT **CREAM MOLESKIN TROUSERS** £139 BY NICOLE FARHI **'50S STYLE SUNGLASSES** £98 BY CUTLER & GROSS

RIGHT: ORANGE, BLACK AND YELLOW ROLL NECK £75 BY GUESS **BLACK MERINO WOOL CARDIGAN** £84 BY JOHN SMEDLEY **BROWN STRIPED BOOTLEG TROUSERS** £115 BY PAUL SMITH **BLACK PLASTIC SUNGLASSES** £109 BY CUTLER & GROSS

ABOVE: WHITE VISOR £10 BY CARHARTT **RED MERINO WOOL ROLL NECK** £65 BY JOHN SMEDLEY **BROWN ARGYLE PATTERN V-NECK** FROM £99 BY TOMMY HILFIGER **LILAC TROUSERS** £45 BY FARAH

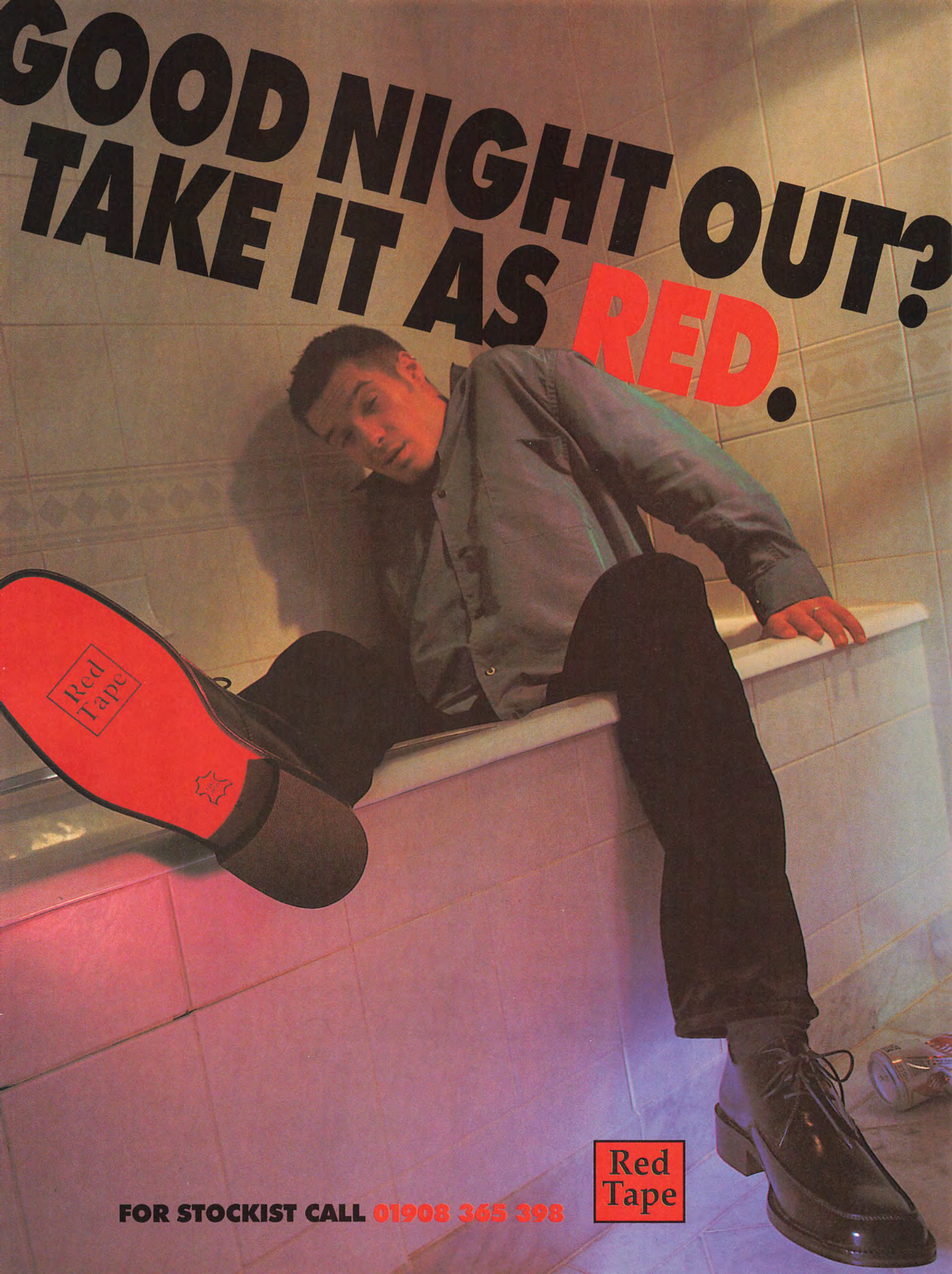
RIGHT: GREY, GREEN AND RED CASHMERE TANK TOP £119 BY BRORA **BLUE GINGHAM SHIRT** £60 BY POLO JEANS RALPH LAUREN **NAVY WINDCHEATER** £160 BY BURBERRY

BELOW: NAVY SHAWL COLLAR KNIT £119 AND **PINK PINSTRIPE SHIRT** £59 BOTH BY HACKETT **OVAL GOLD-RIMMED GLASSES** £173 BY CALVIN KLEIN

ABOVE: RED AND GREY BOWLING CARDIGAN £285 BY PAUL SMITH **JEANS AND T-SHIRT** MODEL'S OWN

LEFT: OLIVE WOOL CAP £28.50 BY KANGOL **MULTI-STRIPE ORANGE/BROWN POLO** £119 BY HUGO **BLACK SUNGLASSES** £109 BY CUTLER & GROSS

BELOW: CREAM KNIT WITH RED AND WHITE STRIPES £99 BY TOMMY HILFIGER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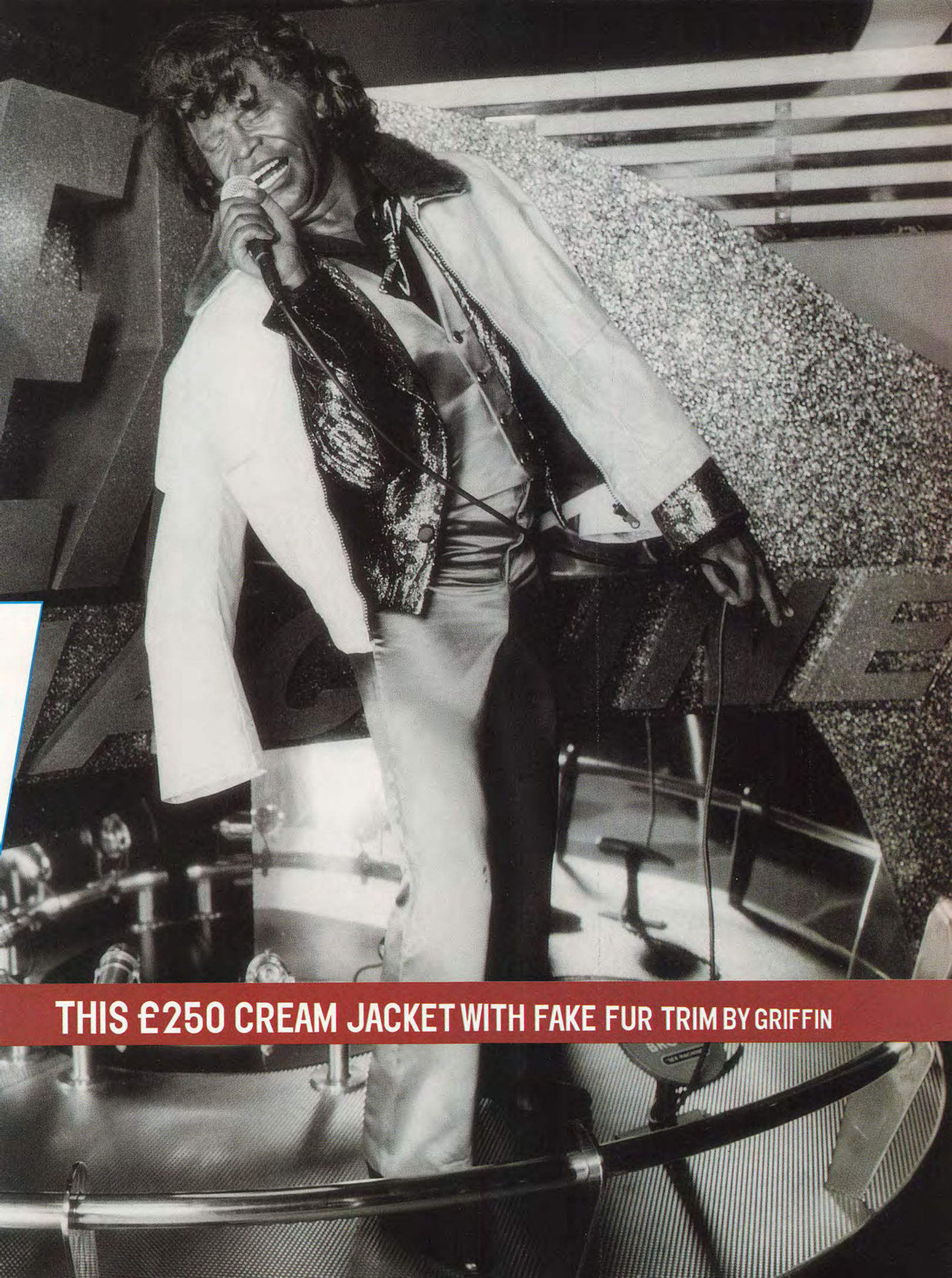
I KNEW THAT I WOULD AS SOON AS I BOUGHT

photos by MICHAEL BIRT "styling" by TOM STUBBS



THIS £250 CREAM JACKET WITH FAKE FUR TRIM BY GRIFFIN

PREVIOUS PAGE: JAMES BROWN – **CREAM JACKET WITH FAKE FUR TRIM** £250 BY GRIFFIN

JIMI HENDRIX – **BEIGE SYMPATEX MAC** £220 BY JUPITER

JOHNNY ROTTEN – **CAMEL WOOL COAT** £250 BY LIMEHAUS

ANARC
IN
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ROD STEWART – **GREY DOUBLE BREASTED COAT** £395 BY STONE ISLAND

CHUCK BERRY – **CREAM COAT WITH EPAULETTES** £448 BY ICEBERG

JARVIS COCKER – **YELLOW NYLON WATERPROOF** £150 BY SCHOTT

JERRY LEE LEWIS – **BROWN NYLON SNORKLE COAT** £195 BY ALL SAINTS

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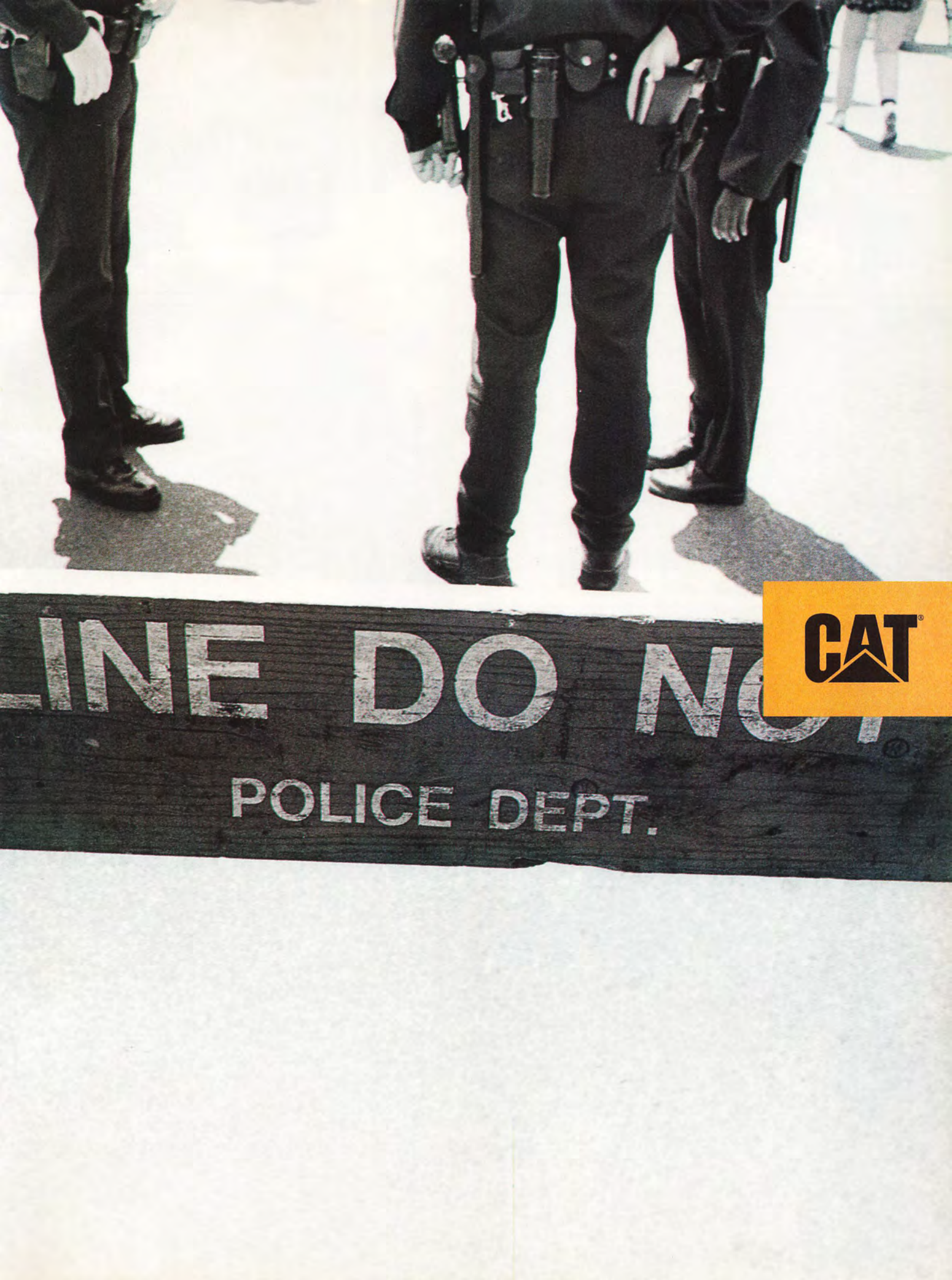
Lisa Serrano, Police Officer. Gramercy, NYC.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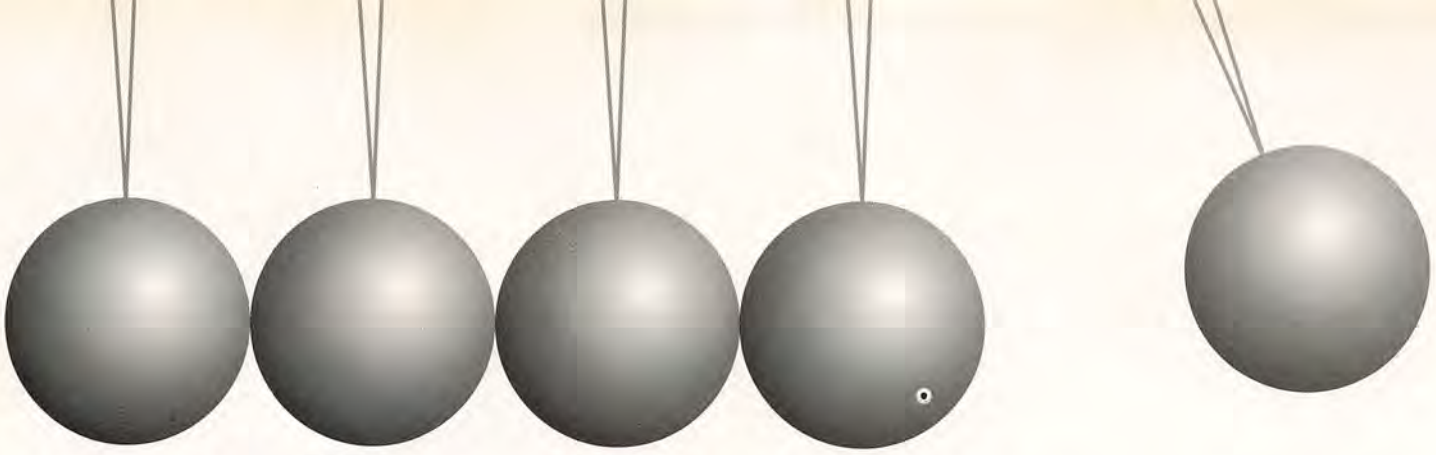
yak, yak



gadget-o-rama

Gizmos. Executive toys. Stuff. Here's loaded's guide to the right unnecessary accessories

In the mid-'70s, Stirling Moss, the former racing driver and one of Britain's all time great eccentrics, owned a luridly decorated house in Mayfair almost entirely run by gadgets. It was a home that had little to do with comfort and convenience or indeed modernity and almost everything to do with James Bond films and a taste for *Playboy* magazine's thoroughly wacky interior design section. Everything in Stirling's home did something more than its designers or Stirling's guests expected it to do. Sometimes it did stuff that not even Stirling expected it to do.

The glass on the ground-floor windows was the sort that enabled Moss to look out while thwarting the attempts of the curious to look in. It was about the only thing in the house that worked without a hitch. Everything else depended upon the strange whims of electricity. The bath could be run by remote control from virtually any room in the house, though there was no guarantee that it wouldn't overflow or burn your bollocks off when you finally sat down in it. Beyond Stirling's study, an interior courtyard contained a fountain floodlit by a supposedly light-sensitive photoelectric cell. Invariably it either gave off a near invisible glow or burnt like a thousand thermo-nuclear suns. The study itself was an ill-frequented room that existed purely because Stirling believed that men of his calibre ought to own studies. Ultimately it was just another useless gadget. Meals resembling today's microwave rubbish could be lowered from the ceiling of the dining room in just eight seconds. For Stirling, the quality of the food consumed was not nearly as important as the speed at which it could be delivered and the cost of the technology that served it up. Behind the walls and beneath the floors of the smallest room in the house lay an elaborate rat's nest of wiring that allowed the toilet seat to be permanently heated to body temperature. It was Stirling's single greatest and most expensive extravagance, and his most dangerous, as a minor plumbing fault or electrical surge could have turned the bog into an electric chair.

Stirling, bless him, was just one of many men who saw the appeal of gadgets and accessories a long time before the rest of us did. Bill Gates, Microsoft's chairman and the richest man in the world, is presently having a home constructed that is part bunker, part mansion and part helicopter pad. It looks a bit like a corporate conference centre masquerading as a holiday resort. The entrance hall, for instance, will be dominated by two dozen 40in monitors that will form a flat-screen display covering an entire wall. Visitors will get an electronic PIN number encoded with their preferences. As you wander toward any room, the monitors will recognise your face, and your favourite pictures will appear, along with the music you like or a TV show or movie you want to watch. This is the home as an executive toy, a nightmarish extension of the silver balls and mini gyroscopes that used to sit on second-hand car dealers' desks during the '80s.

Gates, by the way, has just bought a fleet of rockets from the Russians, who are now flogging off their nuclear warheads – disarmed, thank fuck, or Bill might conceivably launch an all-out strike on rival software manufacturers – for the price of a Montego. Here we have someone who's as close to a real life James Bond villain as it's possible to get. All he's missing is a swimming pool full of crocodiles and a white cat with a diamante collar. But then, like so many other nerds, Bill, who still sports a haircut that looks like it fell on him from out of a tree, never got the point that, along with the gadgets, you need the other stuff; the rings, the briefcases, a decent computer and yes, maybe even that cat.

Blokes love technology for its own sake. We just can't help it

Blokes love gadgets. We just can't help it. A recent survey suggested that women are only interested in technology that can actually do something for them, whereas men like it for its own sake. At the height of yuppiedom, one object more than any other proved this. It was a simple black box that shared desk space with those silver balls. Stamped to its graphite surface above a solitary button were the words "Please Do Not Hit This Switch". When you invariably did, the box heaved and groaned and a plastic hand appeared and flicked the switch back again. This was more than a gadget. It was a meta-gadget, something whose only purpose was itself. Where most gadgets are supposed to save time, this dinky little box dinky was a thoroughly pointless waste of it. Naturally, it sold in huge quantities.

Doubtless the person who invented this is now in charge of world defence spending. Until recently, I used to imagine that men joined the army because of some sadistic impulse I lacked. Then **loaded** sent me away with the paratroopers and I realised that the real reason was all the stuff you got to play with, from brass Zippo lighters through laptop computers to mortars. Plus you get a uniform with a load of pockets to justify the nonsense. It's all very cool. The MOD should make more of this on ✈

their recruitment posters. The Americans certainly have, they are now training the airforce to pilot pilotless aircraft. All the fun of the gadget without any of the silly risks.

The idea that soldiers are doing something in the national interest makes their fascination with technology seem fairly useful. I've convinced myself that my three computers have all combined to make me more efficient and productive – despite the fact that I spend hours fiddling around in the hard drive and turning the screen into a pleasant vision of the Algarve. Furthermore, when all I owned was a battered old Remington I never subscribed to *Typewriter Monthly* or started customising the keys.

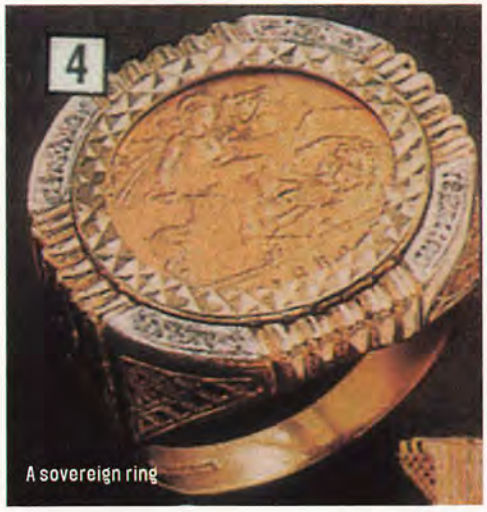
Of course, at the end of the day it doesn't matter how many gadgets you own if you don't get the other accessories right. A crusty with a laptop is still just a crusty with a laptop. But stick the same bloke in a decent suit, slap the right aftershave on him, stick a signet ring on his finger and a Jeremy Hoy bracelet on his wrist, and suddenly he begins to look like a force to be reckoned with.So here we give you a brief guide to what to wear, carry and flash around as you're using the best (or worst) of technology.

Digital watches: something for the modernist

1. Gold Sovereign Rings

A grim relic from the '70s that's presently enjoying something of a vogue thanks to yet another '70s revival. These large, unwieldy hunks of precious metal, normally bearing the profile of Queen Victoria, are really little more than flashy single-finger knuckle-dusters. Once worn almost exclusively by large men with big red necks, white socks and swelling, eventually fatal, cardiac disorders, sov rings have now found a certain tacky popularity with the PVC and E brigade.

Traditional role model: Harry Enfield's Self-righteous Brother; Big Ron.
Contemporary role model: Cathy Dennis.
Best buy: H Samuel's; Car Boot Sales.
Matching technology: Those mini-computers that spell out where to pick up your next fare.



A sovereign ring

A signet ring

2. Signet Rings

The cool version of the sov. Best worn on the little finger. Unlike the sov, they signify class rather than machismo. It's also easier to play with your toys as the little finger is a fairly useless digit unless you're typing, and let's face it, who actually does much typing when they're sitting at their computer? We're all too busy accessing hardcore porn on the net, which doesn't require that pinky.

Traditional role model: Prince Charles; James Bond.
Contemporary role model: Jim Profit from the yuppie drama *Profit* on BBC 2; Agent Mulder from *The X-Files*; James Bond.
Best buy: Harrods.
Matching technology: Apple laptop or high-range Compaq, to be used late at night in rival bastard's office. Expect to pay no less than £3,500.

3. Bracelets

Do try to avoid anything gold. Go for silver or, if you feel like pushing the boat out, platinum. ID bracelets are beginning to make a comeback, although they still have similar associations to the gold sovereign ring. The really classy favour heavy, though not chunky, loose-fitting silver stuff.

Traditional role model: Mike Reid; Mick Jagger.
Contemporary role model: Larry Ellison, the womanising, hard-living, Samurai swordwielding president of Oracle computers; Mark Morrison.
Best buy: The nicest stuff at the moment is sold by Jeremy Hoy or the mail order firm Maruska. Tel. 01488 683 046.
Matching technology: One of Larry's very own Network computers. Alternatively try out the cheaper version Sony are soon to make available.

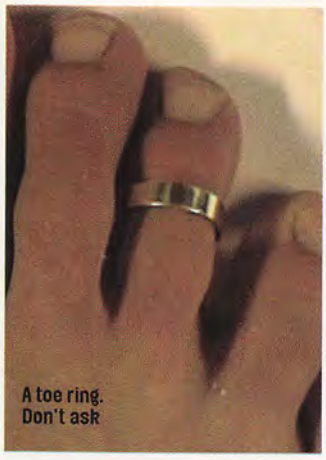
4. Toe Rings

OK, so not many men wear them at the moment, but Jim on the art desk reckons they're the future. Silver is the colour he likes, though by the time you've gone that far down this particular road, colour would seem to be the least of your worries.

Traditional role model: Madam in a Turkish brothel.
Contemporary role model: Jim from the art desk.
Best buy: We have no fucking idea. Ask Jim.
Matching technology: High-end Power Mac with huge 21-inch monitor and fuck-off graphics software.

5. Earrings

OK, so there was a time in the dim and distant past when earrings suggested a brave and buccaneering spirit. Two in the left ear and one in


A toe ring. Don't ask

Take your office home with you

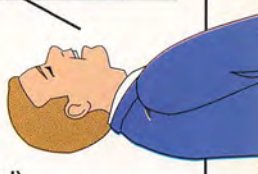
Some cuff links

Dog not included

the right gave the impression that you were in touch with all sorts of interesting and controversial stuff – *Space Invaders*, gay culture, sophisticated women called Pandora. Now, though, they are sorely reminiscent of terminal poverty and the appalling Marilyn Manson.
Traditional role model: David Essex; Marc Bolan.
Contemporary role model: Waynetta Slob.
Best buy: Not sure there actually is one.
Matching technology: TV remote control, launderette.

6. Ties

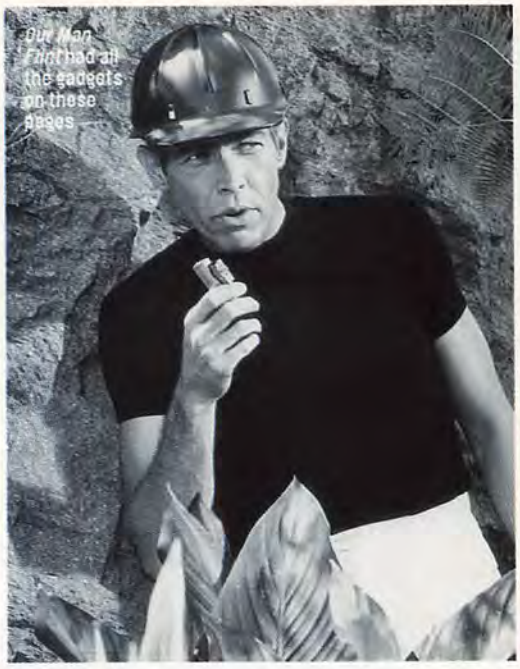
A tie is only as nice as the money you spend on it, and how much can you honestly spend on a fucking tie? If you must wear one, avoid anything sold to you as humorous, such as the sort with *Tazmania* on it, or the one that boasts that you're a Male Chauvinist Pig. When your sole act of rebelliousness is to wear trash like this it simply proves you are, and will remain, the office pariah. Try to go for sober colours, nice



or a pattern that doesn't actually attract the attention of the noise abatement society.
Traditional role model (good): James Bond (again); Michael Caine.
Traditional role model (bad): Jason King.
Contemporary role model (good): James Bond; Michael Caine.
Contemporary role model (bad): Angus Deayton
Best buy: Harrods; Bond Street.
Worst buy: Tie Rack.
Matching technology: Bog-standard Dixons PC sold to you by a spotty kid who keeps going on about Win 95, or Billion Dollar Brain-style computer with loads of whirring tape and flashing lights.

7. Watches

Difficult one, this. Obviously avoid anything that's given away with petrol or makes you look like a gangsta. Basically think about what you do. If you're a roadie go for nigh-on indestructible Casio G-Shocks. If you're a girl go for the Baby Shocks. If you're an architect, Oris and Rolex ✈



should do the job. If you fancy yourself as a latter-day Captain Scott then the top of the range Breitling might come in handy as they send out an emergency electronic distress signal if you get lost. The fact that these are mostly worn in city boardrooms is an irony that's lost on most city execs. The Swatch Irony range is nice, as are Swiss army watches. But for sheer style and originality you can't beat the Gucci 'G'.
Traditional role model: Frank Sinatra (Oris, Rolex).
Contemporary role model: Tim Burgess (Casio digital); James Bond (Omega); Steve Coogan (Rolex, Tag).
Best buy: You can buy watches anywhere nowadays, but for the really good stuff go for top-of-the-range jewellers.
Matching technology: Largely depends on the watch. The more expensive it is, the more expensive you'll need your gadgets to be. That's the way with this stuff, it's all got to match.

8. Record Bags

Once the sole preserve of bona fide DJs who spent their summers in Ibiza and their winters in Goa, these accessories are now so ubiquitous they are fast replacing both the briefcase and the school sports bag. Their popularity has everything to do with the fact that they make you look both busy and interesting. On a practical level, however, they're fairly useless compared to the items being substituted. Actually they're not even that great for carrying records in, as any professional DJ would need to pack half a dozen of them over his shoulder to get any sort of a set going.
Traditional role model: Danny Rampling.
Contemporary role model: *Grange Hill.*
Best names: Dolce & Gabbana and Unity ('cos you can't get them now).
Worst names: Ministry Of Sound, now used strictly by their employees and European ravers with Smiley T-shirts and a taste for aspirin.
Matching technology: Technics SL1200 turntables; Sony Professional Walkmans; portable DAT machines.

9. Cuff Links

For years these were very much Hugh Hefner-wear, normally seen with the *Playboy* logo on them. The mid-'80s saw a brief cuff link revival as devious city barra boys donned them with typically aggressive enthusiasm. Look likely to make a more sedate return thanks to a new and welcome appetite for old-time cool.
Traditional role model: Dean Martin.
Contemporary role model: Tony Blair; Mark Lamarr.
Best buys: Liberty; Jeremy Hoy.
Matching technology: Psion palm-tops; Apple Newton hand-held computer;. Nokia bananas and Nokia 1000's.

10. Hip Flasks

Invaluable really. Though try not to abuse it as the very last thing you want to do is blow the busy professional look by falling over in a meeting. Hip flasks have come a long way since the pewter medicine-bottle look. Nowadays Glenmorangie do one whose body contains a telescopic steel cup, though given its size it's difficult to see how it might fit into any but the largest pocket.
Traditional role model: Lovejoy's red-faced sidekick, Tinker.
Contemporary role model: Well, most of the office claim they want one, but it's pretty hard to think of anyone famous who actually owns one.
Best buys: The large Scotch whisky companies all do their own range.
Matching technology: Do you honestly care?

11. Belts & Braces

Belts are a must. Of course, watch what you buy. Those silver purse belts so popular in Cannes last year are considered to be absolute bollocks now. Strictly the accessory of the clubbing wigger. Go for something brown or black with a simple buckle. Avoid anything that has Jack Daniels or Harley Davidson engraved on it as it makes you look like a gay French foreign exchange student. As for braces, forget 'em. They long since went the way of double-breasted suits. A no-no.
Traditional role model: For belts, Johnny Cash. For braces, Charlie Sheen in *Wall Street.*
Contemporary role model: For belts, Jon Bon Jovi. For braces, Harry Hill.
Matching technology: Depends on what the belt's holding up. If it's jeans, you should probably stick to the simple but brilliantly effective Psion Series 5. For braces get the brick-sized mobile phone as used by Gordon Gecko (Michael Douglas in *Wall Street*).

12. Lighters

Go for the petrol-fuelled variety rather than the notoriously unreliable gas or electric sorts. The best are the original Zippo; again, avoid any bearing silly pseudo rock'n'roll motifs and stick to the brass and silver varieties. The original Ronson is also a bit of a design classic, and just happens to be James Bond's first ever lighter. If you must buy disposables, choose the old-style French-made Cricket lighter.
Traditional role model: The complete cast of *Apocalypse Now* for Zippo, Bond (again) for Ronson.
Contemporary role model: Michael Madsen as Mr Orange in *Reservoir Dogs.*
Best buys: Any decent tobacconist
Matching technology: Automatic pistols, napalm, war heads, radar etc. ◼

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STOCKISTS

SUNDAY LUNCH (from page130)

Polo Sport/Polo Jeans Co Ralph Lauren, 143 New Bond St, London W1; Cruise, 180 Ingram St, Glasgow; Brown Thompson, 88-95 Grafton St, Dublin; Flannels, 4 St Annes Place, Manchester. Stockist enquiries 0171 493 4828 **NX Sport at Next** Branches nationwide. Next Directory mail order no. 0345 100 500. Stockist enquiries 0345 100 500 **Sharpeye** Jones, 13 Floral St, Covent Garden, London WC2; Autograph, 15 Ethel Street, Birmingham; Geese, 12 Barton Arcade, Manchester; Going Dutch, 7 Rosemount Viaduct, Aberdeen. Stockist enquiries 0171 2288 774 **Thomas Burberry Sport** 165, Regent St, London, W1; Eltex, 12 Daulton Way, Priory Square, Birmingham; Hurleys, 83 Piccadilly, Manchester; Great Clothes, 84 York Rd, Leeds. Stockist enquries 0171 734 5929 **DKNY Sportswear** 27 Old Bond St, London W1; The Italian Centre, 162 Ingram St, Glasgow. Stockist enquiries 0171 499 1862 **Reebok** JD Sports Nationwide Stockist enquiries 01524 580100 **Nike** Cobra Sports, Division sports, JD Sports Nationwide. Stockist enquiries 0500 800 040 **Duffs** Slam City Skates, 16 Neal's Yard, London WC2; Board Skates, 2nd Floor, Afflecks Palace, 52 Church Street, Manchester; Boardwise, 428 Lady

Lawson Street, Edinburgh; Chiemsee UK, 13 Duke Street, Brighton. Stockist enquiries 0171 336 6666 **Zegna Sport** 37, New Bond St, London, W1; Harvey Nichols, 107-111 Briggate, Leeds; Robert Old, 20-21 West Over Rd, Bournemouth. Stockist enquiries 0171 493 4471. **Holmes** Slam City Skates, 16 Neal's Yard, Covent Garden, WC2; Doctor Jive, 113 Candleriggs, Glasgow; Well Gosh, 55 Silver Arcade, Leicester; Sumo, 127 Devonshire Street, Sheffield. Stockist enquiries 0171 221 7495 **Atlantic Sport at Burton** 397 West One Shopping Centre, Oxford St, London W1; Saint Enoch's Centre, Glasgow; 44-46 Corporation St, Birmingham; 46-48 Clumber St, Nottingham. Stockist enquiries 0800 138 6138 **O'Neill** Cobra Sports, 172 Oxford St, London, W1; Greades, 31 Renfrew St, Glasgow; Schuh, nationwide. Stockist enquiries 0191 4191 777 **Prada** 44-45 Sloane Street, London SW1. Stockist enq 0171 235 0008 **Joseph** 77 Fulham Road, Stockist enq 0171 7362522 **Festina** Available from jewellers nationwide. Stockist enq 01924 266 367.

KNITS (from page139)

Tommy Hilfiger 6 Sloane St, London SW1; House of Fraser; 140-142 Briggate, Leeds; 60 Deangate, Manchester; Rackhams, 35 Temple Row, Birmingham. Stockist enq 0171 201 8686. **Guess** 171 Brompton Road, London SW3; Harrods, Knightsbridge, London SW3; Dickens & Jones, Selfridges, 400 Oxford StreetW1. Stockist enq 0171 823 8008 **Polo Jeans Ralph Lauren**, Way In, Harrods, Knightsbridge, London SW3. Stock enquiries 0171 491 4967. **French Connection** all branches nationwide. Stockist enq 0171 580 2587. **Kangol** Selfridges, 400 Oxford Street, London W1; all branches of Alders and Beales. **Brora** 344 Kings Road, London SW3. Mail order 0171 736 9944. **Ben Sherman** American Retro, Old Compton St, London W1; UFC Waverly Market, Edinburgh; Stone, Clayton Square, Liverpool. Stockist enq 0800 592 549. **Armand Basi** 12 Floral St, London WC2; GQ, 3 Charter Square, Sheffield;

Motto, 12 Duke St, Brighton; Massumo, 9 Creation Avenue, Lemon St, Dublin. Stockist enq 0171 2784 843. **John Smedley** Sam Walker, 41 Neal St, London WC2; Christopher Scotney, 130 London Rd, Leicester; Flannels, 3 Brazil St, Manchester; Spiral, 16 Gardener St, Brighton. Stockist enq 0171 734 1519. **Paul Smith** 41-42 Floral St, London WC2; Guilio, 26/32 King St, Cambridge; Richmond Classics, 9 Richmond Hill, Bournemouth; John Anthony, 40 The Arcade, Swindon. Stockist enq 0171 379 7133. **YMC** The Library, 268 Brompton Rd, London SW3; Liberty, 210-222 Regent St, London W1; Hip, 14 Thornton's Arcade, Leeds; Aspects, 7 Bridge St, Manchester; Autograph, 15-17 Ethel St, Birmingham. Stockist enq 0171 251 8861 **Holmes** Fly, 352 Kings Rd, London SW3; Dr Jive, 113 Candleriggs, Glasgow; Ideal, 175 Corporation St, Birmingham; Well Gosh, 54-55 Silver Arcade, Silver St, Leicester. Stockist enq 0171 221 7495 **Hugo by Hugo Boss** John Anthony, 54-56 Shaftesbury Avenue, London W1; Flannels, 4 St Anne's Place, Manchester; Whey's, 58 Bridlesmith Gate, Nottingham. Stockist enq 0171 589 5522 **Hackett** 137 Sloane St, London W1. Stockist enq 0171 730 3331 **Nicole Farhi** 158 New Bond St, London, W1; Limeys 26-27 Sadlergate, Derby; Strand, 20-22 Queen Victoria St, Leeds; Riley's, 11 North Bar, York **Farah** Gorgeous, Church St, Manchester; East of Eden, 86A High St, Devon; Pilot, 36 Silver St, Leicester; Way In, Harrods Knightsbridge, London SW3. Stockist enq 01376 502 345 **Next** Branches Nationwide. Stockist enq 0345 100 500 **All Saints** 8 Fonterts Place, London, W1; Psyche, 201-203 Linthorpe Rd, Middlesbrough; Drome, 24 Derby Lane, Liverpool; Sarah Coggles, 91-93 Low Petergate, York. Stockist enq 0171 377 5707. **Gabicci Golf** All department stores nationwide. Stockist enq 0181 903 9037 **Calvin Klein Glasses** Stockist enq 0800 722 020. **Carhartt** Neal Street, Covent Garden, London WC2. Stockist enquiries 0171 481 1503.

COATS (from page 146)

All Saints – see knitwear stockists. **Hugo by Hugo Boss** – see knitwear stockists. **Jupiter** from branches of Austin Reed nationwide, stockist enquiries 0171 7346789 **Stone Island** Velo, 32 Rosslyn Hill, Hamstead, London NW3; Flannels, St Anne's Place, Manchester; John Anthony, 11 New Broadmead, Union St, Bristol; Limeys, 26-27 Sadlergate, Derby. Stockists enquiries 0171 2876767 (**Stone Island CD Roms**, featuring the full autumn/winter collection, available free from any stockist). **Marks & Spencer** branches nationwide. Stockist enquiries 0171 9354422 **Limehaus** Bridlesmith Gate, Nottingham; Zee and Co, Upper St, Islington, London N1; Pilot, Silver St, Leicester, Triad, 54 Albert St, Middlesbrough. Stockist enquiries 01159 632268. **Schott** American Classics, 400 King's Rd, London SW10; Aspecto, 87 Bridge St, Manchester; Union, 60 Grey St, Newcastle; Badger, 25 Bond St, Brighton. Stockists enquiries 0171 436 0986 **Iceberg** available from Selfridges, Oxford St, London W1; Flannels, Police St, Manchester; Cruise, 45 Renfield St, Glasgow; Originals, 3 Church St, Bolton. Stockists enquiries 0171 584 0011.

KNITWEAR PIC: (LEFT) BLACK KNIT WITH SUEDETTE PATCHES £90 BY ALL SAINTS, BROWN FAKE FUR CAP £34 BY KANGOL. BLACK FLYS GLASSES MODELS OWN. (RIGHT) BROWN ZIP TOP WITH TRIM £75 BY ALL SAINTS, BROWN PINSTRIPE BOOTLEG TROUSERS £115 BY PAUL SMITH.

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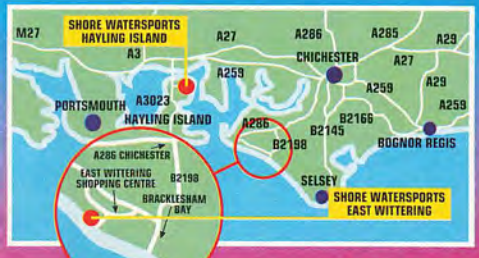

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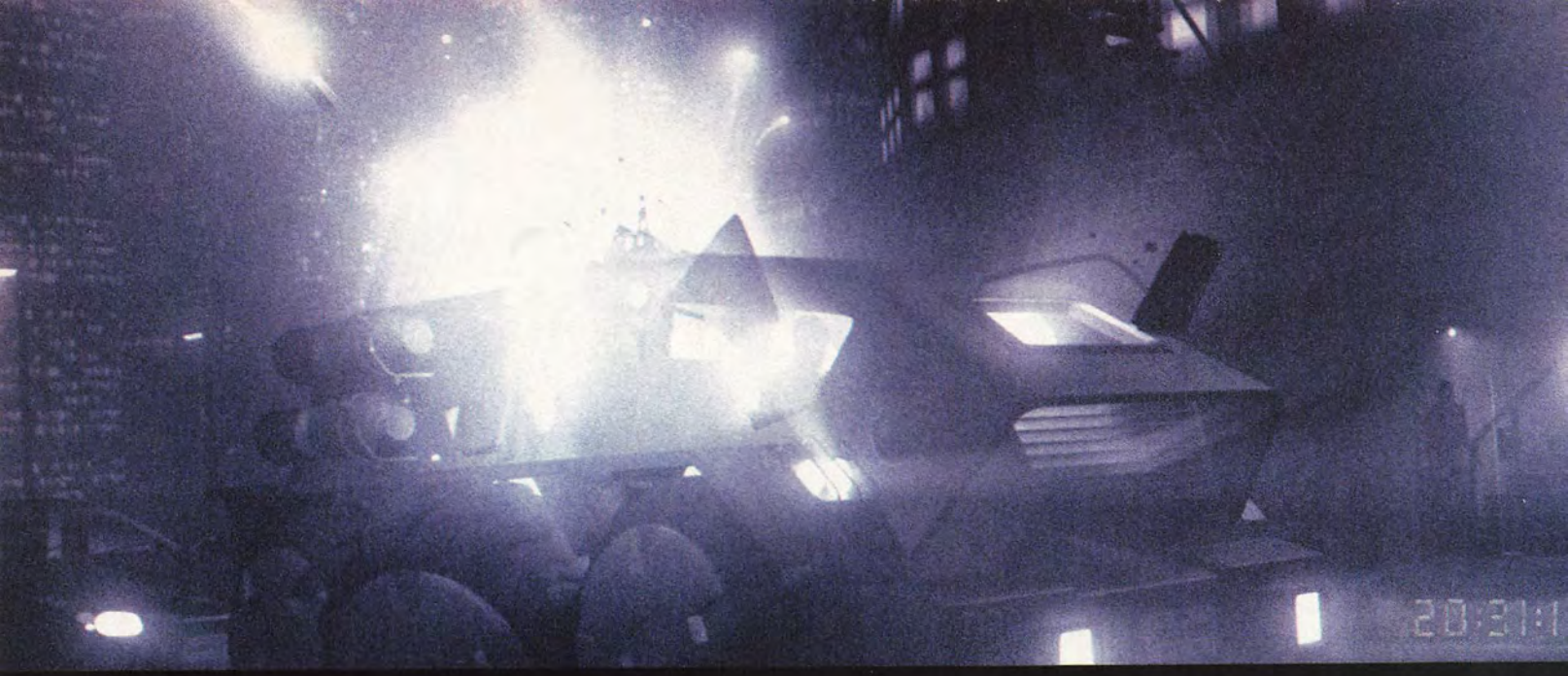

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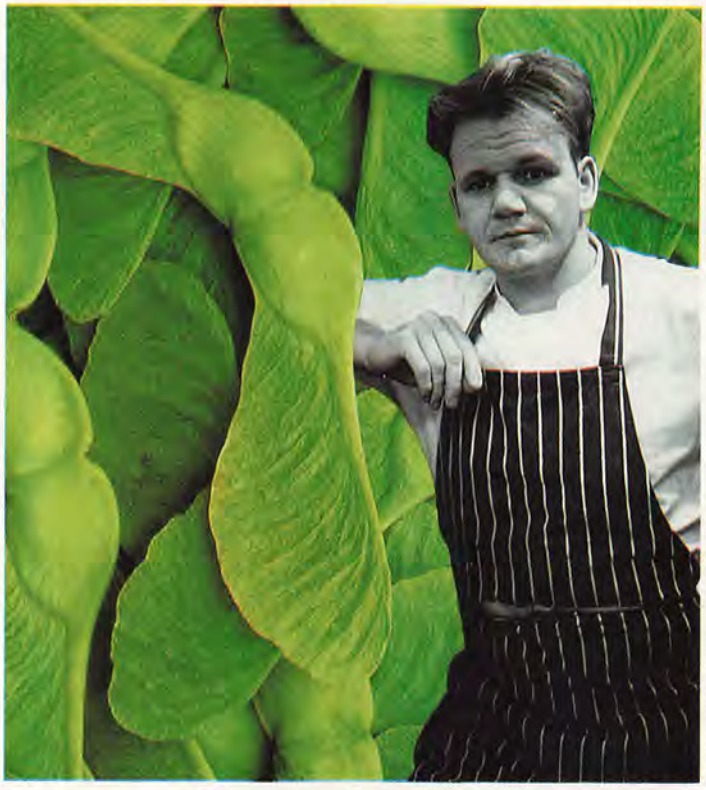

Gordon Ramsay

footballer turned top chef

One-time Glasgow Rangers defender who swapped footie for foie gras and now runs one of Britain's swankiest restaurants, The Aubergine

What was your first job?
I was a washer-up in a country house hotel.

How much did you earn?
I think it was about £3.50 a night for a whole shift. Big money.

What was your worst job?
Washing up isn't the most pleasant job, is it? That was the biggest nightmare.

What's been your greatest influence?
On the cooking side, I suppose that's been Guy Savoy in Paris. He really makes food comfortable to go and eat in a restaurant. You can have three courses of his food without feeling you've got to go to bed for the next three days.

And the Scottish FA want you to cook for the Scotland squad in France 98.
That's right, yes. Football cuisine in this country has excelled itself more than it's ever done so before. I went to see Rangers play Celtic the other week and it was nice to see the way they've changed their attitude to eating. The canteen at Ibrox used to serve bacon, eggs, sausage and tomatoes but now it's serious mozzarella salads, light vinegarettes and lots of nice tagliatelle and wild mushrooms.

Do footballers eat at The Aubergine?
Yes, Ally McCoist and Trevor Steven have been here, as have Ruud Gullit and Frank Leboeuf. Ken Bates is an account customer here now, which reminds me – he hasn't paid last month's bill yet. I'll give him a reminder.

What was your most memorable moment on the football field?
Playing in a reserve match against Celtic in an Old Firm clash with about 18,500 people watching. That was quite a buzz at 18.

Why did you stop playing?
My contract wasn't renewed after one year – I had a very lazy right foot. It was a big blow at 19, but if I couldn't play for Rangers, I didn't really want to play for anyone else. I'm a stubborn little bastard.

Back in the kitchen, do you take risks?
I went to a three-star Michelin restaurant in Barcelona last month and the pudding was a little Cornetto with Fisherman's Friend flavoured ice cream. You've got to admire that because the guy who runs the place has got the bollocks to put his reputation on the line. Fisherman's Friend ice cream is a bizarre concept, but it worked, big time. I'm actually thinking about putting it on my menu but I just don't want to copy his idea. I suppose I could do Benylin ice cream or something...

What's been the secret of your success?
Staying in the kitchen and not appearing on *Ready, Steady Cunt*, sorry, I mean *Ready, Steady Cook*. I'm not a celebrity chef – I hate that word – I'm a cook. I don't want to invent the next Cornish pasty on *Ready, Steady Cunt*. And I don't want to appear on *Can't Cook, Won't Wank* at fucking 9.30 in the morning either.

Do you ever think about giving it all up and doing something else?
No, not at all. I've just started writing my new book on fish, and I'm a consultant to the World Cup next year, so I'm very happy. I'm staying in the kitchen.

Do you ever get angry?
Yes, I get very fucked off but I have to walk away. I'm not into wrapping pans around people's ears. I've got a loud voice and I do use it from time to time, but at the age of 30, I've decided to turn the other cheek.

When was the last time you had to lay down the law?
We had a beautiful caramelised, carved sweetbread on as a special the other week. One particular customer wanted it with pomme purée – but it's served with radish. He asked me if I could do it and I said, "I didn't do this dish with pomme purée – it's an insult." He turned round and said, "Well, if I can't have it with pomme purée, then I'm leaving." So I said, "Well, fuck it, leave then." People wait three months to come and eat here. My recommendation was to have the sweetbread with radish and he didn't want it. He got up and left.

What would you think if you met yourself in a restaurant?
Confident, charismatic and arrogant. No, that's not really true! I wake up in the morning and I physically make things happen – I don't sit back and depend on other people to make me a millionaire. I suppose there would be an air of arrogance about me – I'd have to take my hat off and admire myself!

Does your position often attract the opposite sex?
We have ladies who come here for dinner ringing up to ask me if I can show them a recipe at home on a Sunday night. It's tempting, especially as I get these kind of offers every other week, but I'm very, very happily married. I look at the menu but I never eat off it.

What's the best decision that you've ever made?
I got a really shit bollocking one night from Marco Pierre White when I was 21. I thought my life had crumbled and decided that I wanted to go back to football. I didn't care at what level – I just wanted to go back. The following day, Marco phoned me up and asked me to return to his kitchen. So I did. Finishing off my three-year stint with him was one of the most important decisions I've ever had to make.

And the worst?
Cooking for an unknown guest. I got told a week before that a VIP was coming. On the night, there was big hype and armed security outside the front door, but they still wouldn't let me know his name. They just said, "It's a VIP". I waited till he arrived, wondering who it was – and in walked Salman Rushdie. Within 45 minutes, 95 per cent of my dining room had fucking disappeared. Shat their pants. Not a good decision at all. I'm definitely not doing that again.

What ambitions do you have left?
I want to win three Michelin stars, but I'm not going to go down the road as a psychotic chef and have a heart attack on the stove at the age of 40. I want to be successful, but I want to work hard and play hard at the same time.

Do you wear tailor-made clothes?
No, I wear off-the-peg clothes. I'm not into that bullshit.

Do you have an office drinks cabinet?
No, I don't drink. I'm a bit of a speed freak on summer nights, when I love driving my bike.

Whose job would you most like to have if you could choose?
Glenn Hoddle's, because of the prospect of England winning its first World Cup in 30 years. I'm far more into Scotland, but I think England have got a better chance.

How do you rate yourself?
I'm very much a team member. I got myself into hot water about six months ago with fussy next-door neighbours who started attacking my staff. I took my apron off, jumped in and fucking beat them up. I suppose anyone else would have walked away from it, but I couldn't. My staff work so hard for me. They put their career in my hands and I'm here to turn them into something called talent.

How much do you earn?
Do you really want to know? I got the advance on my book and went and bought a new Porsche. But I got banned three months later for doing 147mph, which wasn't too bright. I earn about £150,000 a year which is comfortable but not mega-bucks.

How much cash do you have on you at the moment?
I don't carry cash. My wife's the one who sorts all that out. I've just got a £20 note on me – I'm not into carrying bundles of cash and looking like fucking Arthur Daley with a grand in my pocket wrapped up in a tissue.

NIALL HAMPTON

PHOTO: HARRY BORDEN

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The Hedonists' Handbook

What's going on in the world at the moment

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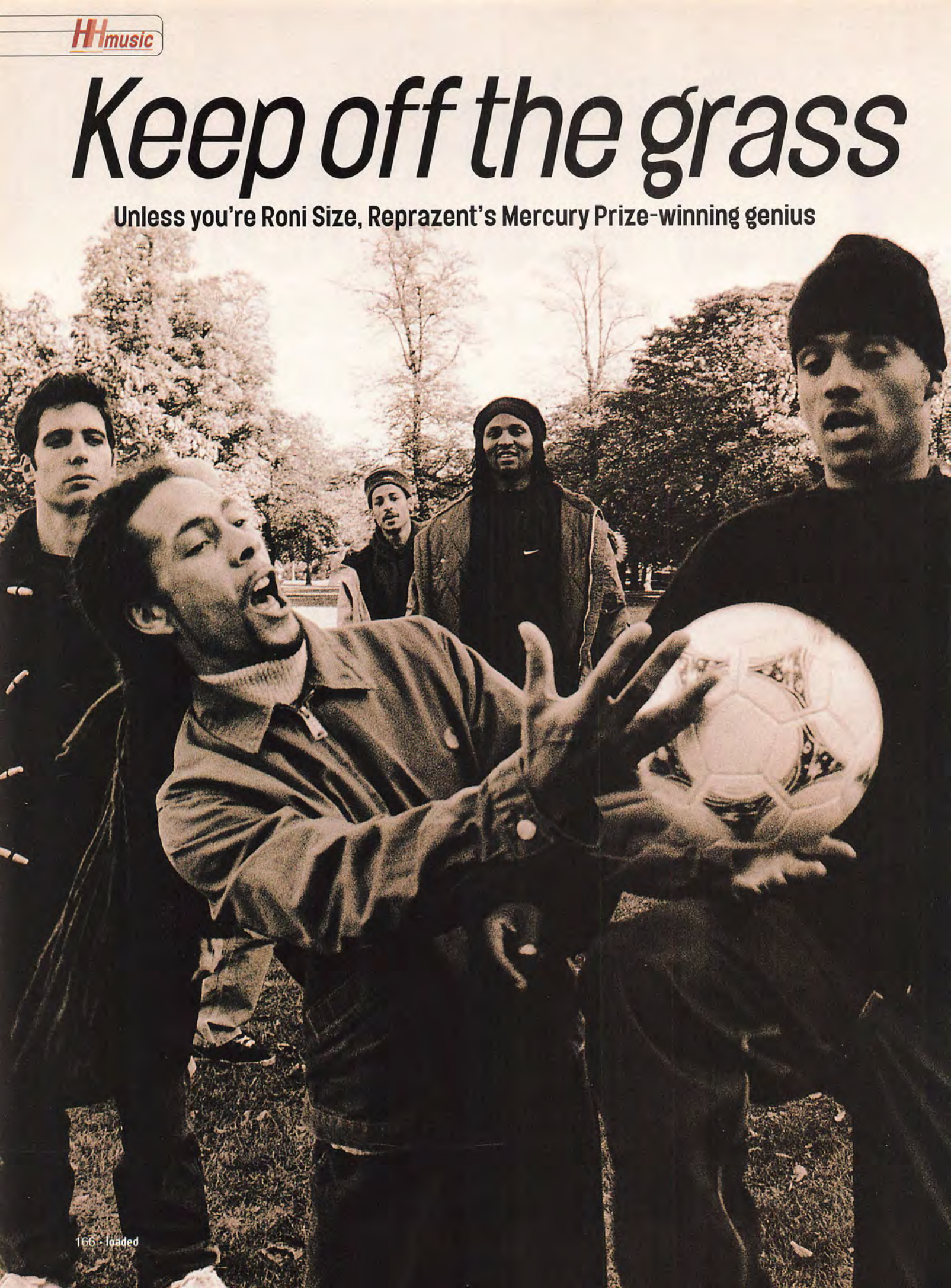
Keep off the grass

Unless you're Roni Size, Reprazent's Mercury Prize-winning genius



"To you, Ron, Ron, RON! To you, Ron, Ron"

By the time I reached Marks & Spencer, I was hallucinating. The 50-metre walk from Kensington's Royal Garden Hotel was coloured by mysterious green cyber-runes appearing across the pavement. The Reprazent interview had been an unusual one. Just a little bit more than I'd bargained for: the tape recorder jammed at the mention of speed garage; I forgot where I was halfway through, and left feeling like this year's Mercury Music Prize winners probably wanted to ask me a few questions. Why? A primed buzz from the hydroponic forests of Bristol, Reprazent's home town, had taken leave with my senses.

Reprazent are doing for drum'n'bass what James Brown did for funk. They're hitting upon the untrodden highs of the dancefloor, wiring in their influence and knocking people out in the process. It took them two years to create their Mercury Prize-winning *New Forms* LP and a split-second to decide to transport their entire studio onto the live stage. They tested it at this year's Tribal Gathering and coerced 20 grand's worth of computer gear into making a tent full of people jump. From there it has exploded into the cream of dancefloor assaults; bombing the crowd with an intense live rush of drums, walls of bass and a cavalry attack of vivid digital sounds.

Roni Size is the central figure behind the band, who, alongside DJ Die, Suv and DJ Krust, makes the machines talk the Reprazent language. On drums they now have Rob Merrill, a character from the punk era replacing original sticksman Clive who has gone off the radar somewhere with Portishead. The double bass and other live instruments are courtesy of multi-talented Si John, MC Dynamite works the crowd at the front of the stage, and then there's Onallee, the female vocalist who, according to Roni Size, "brings out the strength of 20 women on stage".

They name-check funk as their gelling influence and describe their sound in the kind of way a futuristic gang in a William Gibson novel might speak. During the interview, they answer collectively. Each member speaks in short sentences, which, all added together, create the big picture of what they are about:

"We're trying to do something new... It's the use of sounds and not treating them in a conventional way... A fresh angle... Morphing things together... Everyone is into the sonics, the way a sound works, the space it occupies, as opposed to whether it's a good sale... It's not important if it's A minor or E sharp, fuck all of that... "

Unlike the modern rock'n'roll animal of the dance scene, this crew are not on the Pac-Man mission of hedonism, but workaholics from another club dimension building their own *Six Million Dollar Man* of sound. "We're just stepping off into this new world," explains Krust. "We're pioneers, making music in our own environment – Bristol."

"It's like Tyson – you get your head knocked about and feel the force"

Up on stage, we get a glimpse of that environment. The feel of the Jimi Hendrix Experience was once described as "heavy metal falling from the sky". In physical terms, Reprazent music doesn't merely fall on you...

"It creates immediate impact," enthuses Roni. "It can hit you like a train, literally. It's coming at you... BLAM! There's not much music which moves with that furious pace, with that much depth, with that much sub-bass and ripping top end. It catches you when it hits... you can't ignore it."

"It's got dance, movement and energy," adds Dynamite. "Like concrete made into many different forms and shapes..."

"Like Mike Tyson," says Krust.

"...Like drugs without drugs," continues Dynamite.

"...You go a few rounds. Get your head knocked about a bit and feel the force," finishes Krust.

"Mike Tyson? He is *the worst* description of this music," cuts in Roni. "We're looking to stay. We're not getting knocked out like Tyson."

Experience this band and boast about it to your grandchildren.

ROWAN CHERNIN

Reprazent's LP New Forms *is out now, new single 'Windows' is out early next year, both on Talkin Loud.*

"It's alright, he's still alive"

PHOTOS: ANTONY MEDLEY

"We've gotta fight for the right (to be par on the tee)"

Prisoners of Zen

Beastie Boys, macrobiotic cafes, cows and karma

NO! SLEEP! 'Til BROOKLYN! Fight! For your right! To PAAARRTEEE!! Yep, in the greedy '80s, the Beastie Boys were big, bad, baseball-capped party animals, chucking cans at Scousers and laughing at cripples. Ten years on, the Beasties have transformed into golf-playing, meat-shy monk-lovers, running their vast Grand Royal empire (magazine, clothes label, superfunky record company) and campaigning for human rights in Tibet. Nowadays it's less *Licensed To Ill*, more *Quick! Get To Holland And Barrett's Before The Meter Runs Out On The Volvo*!

Still, as we meet in a dingy macrobiotic cafe ('All The Peat You Can Eat!'), two thirds of the Beasties, Mike D (currently rockin' the 'Nigel From *EastEnders*' look) and Adam Yauch (currently rockin' the 'Bobby Sands' look) are loudly fussing about the rennet content of Hobnobs. They seem the very men to answer that most pressing of questions: 'What do cows dream of?'

"Being allowed to be free in a big green area", reckons Mike. "Eating freely and roaming around conceiving whenever they damn please."

Yauch, clearly worn down by hacks probing him about dead Buddhists, snaps at the idea of cows as randy bovine hippies. "Shit, man!" he howls, "Can't we talk about golf?"

"Actually," continues Mike, "Golf is just an excuse to be a cow for a couple of hours, isn't it? Hanging out in fields for a few hours."

"We're planning a major co-existence with other planets through music"

Hmm, aren't you just making excuses for getting thrashed in our very own Pro Celebrity Golf tournament, 'The **loaded** Cup'?

"They beat you?" shouts Yauch, leaping from his seat like a tiny cricket, "You gotta win that shit back, Mike! You gotta do Grand Royal proud! Get out there and swat that thing! *S*hank it up into the *woods*!"

Surely, I suggest, playing golf is merely an excuse to wear really loud plus-fours.

"Any excuse to wear the plus-fours!" agrees Yauch, and pulls out a Polaroid of himself in a moon-landing spacesuit.

"Check this out," he grins. "This is a kinda techno look I was trying to get together for a party tonight. Take it to the next notch, style-wise. Whaddaya think?"

It'd probably be a bit hot for a party. A bit like a gorilla suit.

"Nah, it's air-conditioned," explains Yauch excitedly. "It has its own oxygen! That's the *beauty*!"

Talking of techno, seeing as speed garage is dead, what's the next movement sneaking around the corner of the dance bungalow?

"I'd like to see far more conga lines on the dancefloor," deadpans Mike. "Snakin' out into the street, man!"

"Yeah! Mambo meets cha-cha!" adds Yauch, "but in a very high-speed, frenetic, hectic kinda style."

Which leads us to the big question: it's been two years since *Ill Communication*. Where's the bloody new album, you lazy cunts?

"It's dossin'!" laughs Mike. "It's up in the atmosphere somewhere, waiting for us to pull it down. *Dossin'*, man!"

To keep us going, however, the mighty Grand Royal are about to release an album of their Monk Aid Tibetan Freedom concert featuring the likes of Blur, Beck and Bjork and a whole buncha hot vinyl by quirky Jap-poppers Buffalo Daughter, proto-Lemonhead Ben Lee and the Blues Explosion of Butter 08. Sounds like a plan for world domination.

"Not so much world domination," says Mike. "More of an interplanetary universal participation. We're planning a major co-existence with other planets through music."

Some people have no ambition.

JOHN PERRY

Urban Hymns *is out now on Hut records. That, of course, is by The Verve, not the Beastie Boys. The Beastie Boys don't have any records out.* Tibetan Freedom Concert *(various artists),* Captain Vapour Athletes *by Buffalo Daughter,* Something To Remember Me By *by Ben Lee and* Creamy *by Butter 08, however, are all out now on Grand Royal.*

PHOTO: DEREK RIDGERS

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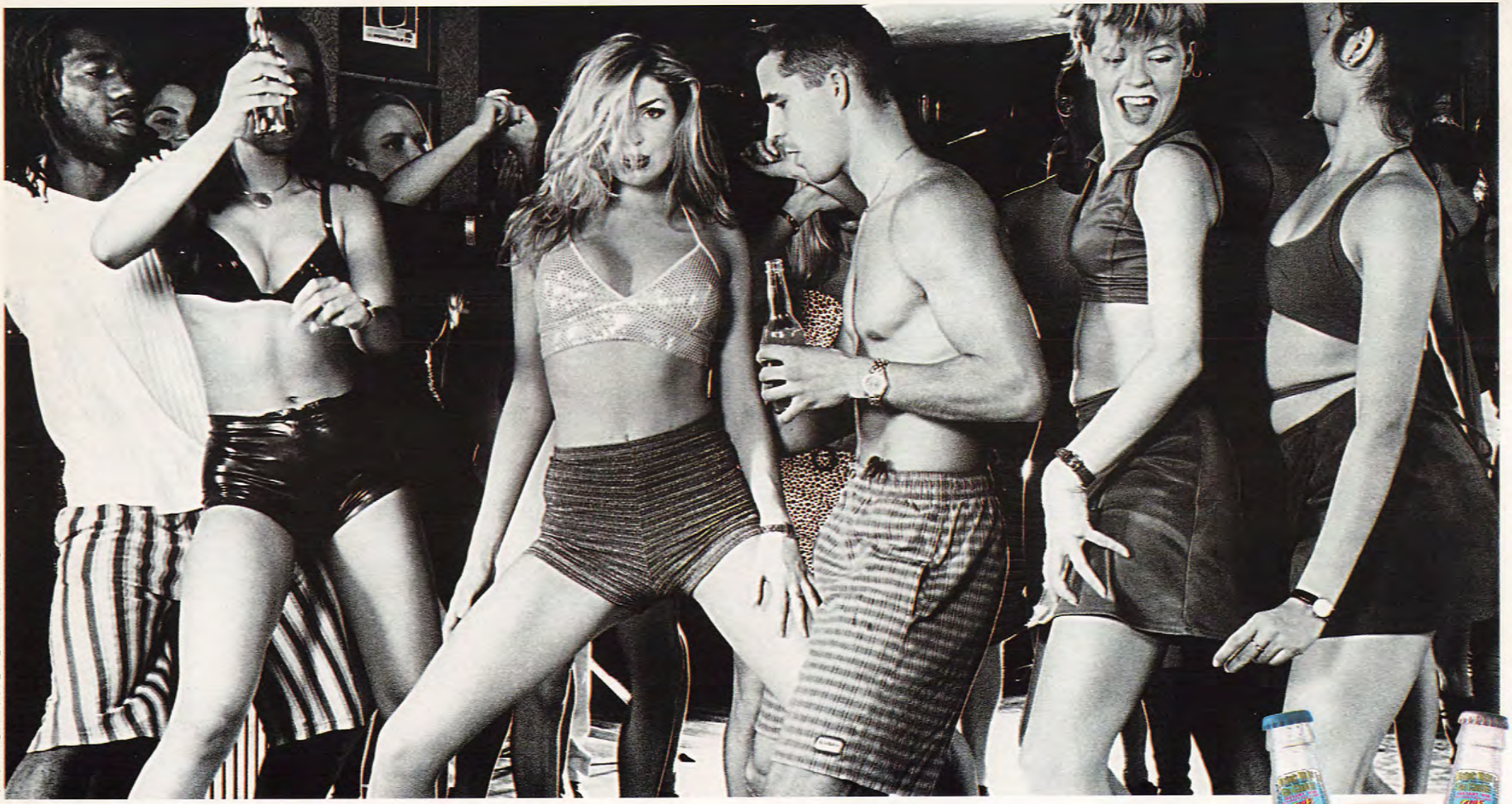

Shot on location at the Buzz Bar, Leicester Square, London

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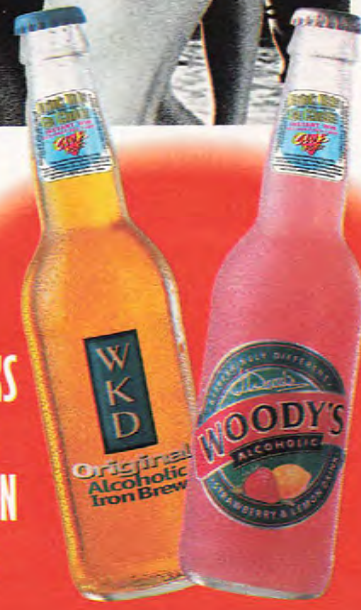

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"It's not that bad a haircut, really"

Drum'n'Bassey

Propellerheads Bond with the classy chanteuse

"The man who comes back through the Door in the Wall will never be quite the same as the man who went out," wrote Aldous Huxley in *The Doors Of Perception*. The music of clubland can either be viewed as a characterful cul-de-sac of brain damage or a regenerating metropolis; rebuilding old and new sounds for the territory of hedonists and music lovers. Propellerheads are part of the latter. The cinematic breakbeat funk of their summer hit 'Spybreak!' was followed by their David Arnold collaboration 'On Her Majesty's Secret Service', which reached Number Seven in the charts. And now Shirley Bassey herself has graced their current release 'History Repeating'. The three mixes of the track carry the full vocal power of Bassey classics like 'Light My Fire', cut with the Propellerheads' progressive style. We are on the London to Bath train with the men behind the Propeller, Alex Gifford and Will White.

Who had the inspired idea to make a record with Shirley Bassey?

Alex: It started on a plane and ended in the clouds. We were having a discussion about who would be the most fantastic person to have singing. We'd made a tune, so I sat up one night and wrote some words, made a demo and sent it to Shirley's management. After a while they came back to us and said, "Yeah, she's up for it."

Was there any vetting like, "Darling, who are these Propellerheads?"

Alex: They requested a Propellerheads press pack.

Will: We just love the idea of her listening to Propellerheads records in a flat in Monte Carlo.

How long did it take to do the record?

Alex: All of about two to three hours in London's Maison Rouge studio. She brought along a musical director; you don't have a star dealing with a bunch of potential scurrilous scamps. We were sat in the next room, and when we heard her voice, our hair stood on end.

Did you go the whole hog and bring in a full orchestra?

Alex: We use a sample off a Russ Meyer soundtrack, 'Finders Keepers'. It's got instant sassiness.

What did you do after the recording, got out to a club, have a meal?

Will: Shirley did say, "We must have lunch."

Alex: We thought it would be somewhere exotic but she said, "We're going to get fish'n'chips... it's got to be out of newspaper."

One of the song's lyrics, 'Some people dance when they don't know who's singing', is that a parody of all this mindless clubbing?

Alex: People do tend to get obsessed with what's hip and what you are supposed to like. Are we supposed to be into speed garage? It's all the fault of the journalists. That's the good thing about getting someone as timeless as Shirley to sing a song which is basically saying 'this is history repeating'. Let's not get too deep into it, though. It's all to do with exciting big bazookas, as long as they're jiggling.

Hey?

Alex: We've just made another track with David Arnold for the new James Bond film *Tomorrow Never Dies*. There is this fantastic car chase where one of the baddies is confronting Bond with an enormous bazooka. At the very explosive moment when Bond gets his chopper out the front of his Beamer, there's this crowning, glorious musical moment and the guitar bit comes in, the 'din-din-din-dow-dow-dow'. And I fucking played it! If you're in a cinema, watching the next Bond film and some prat stands up in the middle and screams... that's me.

Did you work with any other stars on *Decksandrumsandrockandroll*, your new LP?

Will: We really wanted to get Mike D (Beastie Boys) and Lemmy.

Alex: There's a tune on the album called 'Oh Yeah'. It's got the sound of Will skating, which we made a stereo loop out of, and there's a girl going "Oh yeah" while he does the tricks. We really wanted Mike D going, "Yeah, sister, check it out".

Alex, having previously played sax in The Stranglers, has their music and attitude had much influence on the Propellerheads?

Yeah, certainly on the music. Those big riffs and kind of Doors-esque rolling grooves, the melodic but quite heavy bass lines and that sense of dark drama. And attitude, in terms of having your own agenda and sticking to it and not really taking that much notice of what everyone else says. I'm not saying our agenda's the same, but they took more flak than any other band and managed to keep it together and not get paranoid.

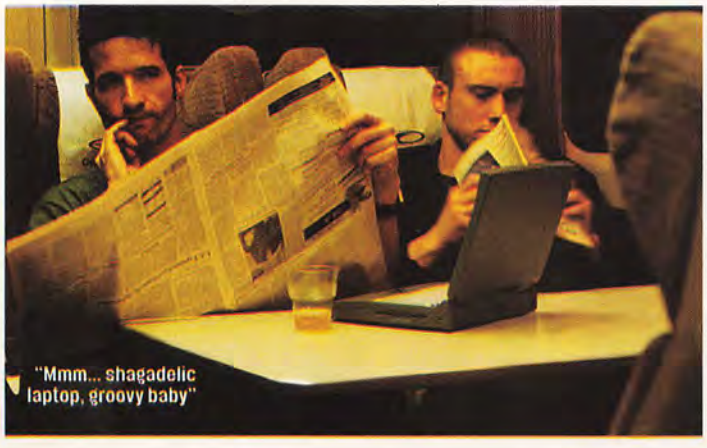
When you play live, you've got drums, keyboards, decks, gadgets... It's not strictly a band or a DJ outfit as such, so how do you describe yourselves?

A Band-J.

ROWAN CHERNIN

The Propellerheads' premier LP Decksandrumsandrockandroll *is out on 26 Jan. The single 'History Repeating' featuring Shirley Bassey is out now on Wall Of Sound.*

"Let's not get too deep about it. It's all to do with exciting big bazookas"


"Mmm... shagadelic laptop, groovy baby"

PHOTOS: ANTHONY CULLEN

Heaven & L

Original gangsta rapper LL Cool J has found God and denounced drugs. Noooo!

Superfly hustles into the room, trailing his entourage of bodyguards, masseurs and groupies. He shrugs off his velvet cape, settles onto a nearby chaise longue and snaps his gold-encrusted fingers for an elaborate cocktail. Suitably refreshed, the Pimp King leans forward and confides that his funky wraparound shades will be staying firmly on. And why?

"I've been getting shit-faced on snakebite!" he grins.

Sadly, LL Cool J, tattooed brickshithouse rapper and elder statesman of hip-hop who outsells Snoop, Cube, Coolio and Vanilla Ice, is just taking the piss, trying out some of the "damn crazy British phrases" he's picked up over here.

In fact, the man who walked with a panther and pumped 'Fourteen Shots To The Dome' is a changed man. He's the star of a heart-warming *Cosby Show*-style sitcom called *In The House*, he does a sickening amount of work for 'cheridee' and the sleeve of his super-smooth new album *Phenomenon*, declares, "I live for God's divine plan."

"Sure, I had fun back during the '80s, I'm not afraid to admit it," shrugs LL, rattling his gold. "Man, back then, anyone who put a 12in out, they'd be fighting the ladies off. You could weigh 500st, with 65 nasty big pimples on your nose, and chicks would still love you. And drugs? Man, like I say, I had fun."

Unfortunately, like any card-carrying Godbotherer, LL sees the days of 'Mama Said Knock You Out' and 'Rock Da Bells' as his darkest hour. Unlike Alan Titchmarsh, however, LL has written it all down and published it in an autobiography entitled *I Make My Own Rules,* in an attempt to steer the kids along the path of righteousness.

"If you were planning on climbing Mount Everest, right?" explains LL earnestly. "You met a guy who tells you to climb up 1,000m, move across, climb a whole bunch more? Yeah?"

Yee-ah...

"That's one thing. But if the same guy had already been up to the peak, came back and said, "OK, this is what you do," you would listen a lot more attentively, wouldn't you?

"Point is, I can't go up to a 17-year-old and say, "Don't smoke weed, don't do drugs," unless I can explain to them that I did it myself and it almost destroyed me."

Ah. Still, while most rap stars claim to be 'Down Wit' Da Lord', they still write songs with titles like 'I Sell Drugs', 'I've Got A Big Dick, Me', or 'My Car's More Expensive Than Yours, You Big Joey'. *Phenomenon* still manages to shake sticky hands with the devil by sampling hefty chunks of drug-addled man-lover George Michael and The Beastie Boys' 'Fight For Your Right (To Party)'.

"In the '80s, anyone who put a 12in out, they'd be fighting the ladies off"

"Beastie Boys?" asks LL, confused. "On what song?"

On '4, 3, 2, 1'.

"That's not the Beastie Boys!" he growls.

Oh yes it is.

"Oh no it's not!"

Oh yes it is, behind you, etc. In fact, the Beasties' song has been credited in the sleeve notes, so I win 50,000 points on Mike Read's *Pop Quiz* and a T-shirt emblazoned with 'I Know More About LL Cool J's New Album Than He Does'.

"Ooh, that really rips my knitting!" squawks Mr Cool. "I'm going down the rec on me Chopper!"

JOHN PERRY

Phenomenon *is out now on Def Jam records.*

"That's me in the corner, that's me in the spotlight, finding my religion"

PHOTO: JAKE WALTERS

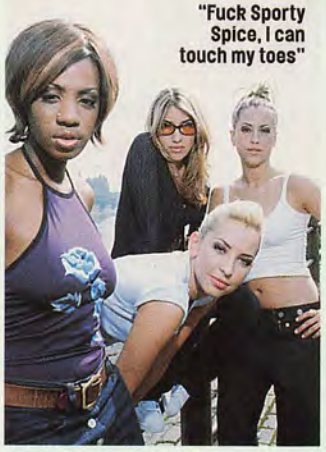
albums reviewed by cheeky

Been caught jamming

Jane's Addiction: Kettle Whistle (WEA)
Jane's Addiction? Didn't they have that song called 'Been Caught Stealing' which has a dog barking all over it? I hate dogs. In fact I hate all animals. Fur? God's way of telling us to get a new boiler.

Salt'N'Pepa: Brand New (ffrr)
Actually, their real names are Cheryl James and Sandra Denton. Weren't they in *Grange Hill*? I'm sure Salt got mixed up in one of Pogo Patterson's hare-brained get-rich-quick schemes, selling faulty Balaclavas to the aged. Or it could have been Gonch.

Condiments, the lot of 'em


"Fuck Sporty Spice, I can touch my toes"

All Saints: All Saints (London)
Dirty, smutty bird band crawling about on their bellies like damp-ridden cheese mites, dripping with desire, hungry like the wolf, panting about how they've been buying smack and how they all want me on my knees. Sadly, I'm a monkey and I don't have knees. Not in the conventional sense, anyway.

REVIEWS CONTINUE PG 175

Cheeky's favourite fiendish Japanese album of the month

Various Fiendish Japanese Minds: Encyclopedia Of Electronic Machines (Namco)
An album entirely made up of the noises from Japanese video games. Yes, that's right; an utterly insane record. Typical track: four minutes of some oriental bloke shouting "WANKER!" over Jonah Lewie's 'You'll Always Find Me In The Kitchen At Parties' played on a faulty Blackpool organ. There are tracks entitled 'Zombie Castle', 'Battle Of The Sweets' and, most memorably, 'Crab Panic'. Best of all, however, is a track called 'Mr Plow Wrestler' where Burt Kwouk grunts at some lobsters before being solidly hit on the head by a mallet. The men who created this record obviously believe that the surrender at Hiroshima was a clever PR stunt. Completely essential.

MEN BEHAVING BADLY
PREMIUM EDITION

Rapt in Foil

Things are hotting up for the Scots guitar band

Foil: you'll always find them in the kitchen at parties

So you're in a screaming-weasel mad-bastard crashing-helicopter guitar-hurting pop-punk quartet from West Lothian. You play songs with choruses that crash against the cliffs of your ears like wave upon wave of oil-soaked shags. Your new single 'Reviver Gene' – Nirvana stomping on the Pixies as they run around squealing in little green hats – is fantastic. Even your names are great – Hugh Duggie (Vocals), Shug Anderson (Bass), Alan Findlay (Drums) and Colin McInally (Guitar). You couldn't sound any more Scottish if you were Rod Stewart. All you need now is a name for the band. You wander into the kitchen looking for inspiration. The Egg Timers? Balloon Whisk? Extractor Hood? Hey, now *that's* a great name! But then you slip on some pancake batter, hit your head, and in your dazed stupor decide on a name. Foil. Yes, *Foil*.

What kind of name's that for a band? Slaphead sex-god singer Hugh Duggie, a man described in Foil's publicity blurb as being "capable of stripping paint through sheer lung power alone", is the man with the answers.

So is it Foil as in fencing, or Foil as in baked potatoes?

"Oh, we're much more like baked potatoes," admits Hugh candidly. "You know, sitting around all day watching TV, getting stoned..."

Ah-ha! Foil as in getting stoned? A hardcore drugs reference if I'm not mistaken.

"Nooo!" howls Hugh. "We called ourselves Foil because we thought we'd avoid band name questions. But now it's all people ever ask us."

So, tell us about the debut album, *Spread It Around*. Is that 'Spread it Around' as in flu or as in Stork SB?

"Flu, definitely," says Hugh emphatically. "It definitely has connotations of disease and sickness," he adds weirdly.

Ebola as the new rock'n'roll, then?

"Yeah! I like the idea of Foil being spread around like a virus."

With admirable foresight, however, Foil have included a song entitled 'Penicillin' on the album. Unfortunately, there's also a song called 'Acid Kewpie'. One sickening disease is cured only for another one to come along and drive us mad with its drug-fuelled contagion.

"Nah, Acid Kewpie's not about drugs. An 'Acid Kewpie' is a bird who does your head in, isn't it?"

Maybe in West Lothian.

"No, it's acid as in acid tongue," he explains. "And as for 'Penicillin', well, you need a bit of medication to get you through the day, don't you?"

"You need a bit of medication to get you through the day, don't you?"

See? SEE!? More bloody drugs!

"No, the only song like that is 'Reviver Gene', which is about wanting to get pissed but not having enough money to do it."

If there's any justice, Foil won't have to worry about where the next Babycham's coming from for a while. With a tour this Fall with, er, The Fall, and top radio airplay for 'Reviver Gene', it's all happening pretty fast. So fast, in fact, the band were signed up by record company Mute at their first ever gig.

"I know it sounds made up," says Hugh. "But it's also true. They signed us on the spot. It was pretty fuckin' bizarre, especially because we were fucking awful that night."

One last question, Hugh. *Have* you actually stripped paint using only the power of your vocal chords?

"No, I'm more of a power tool man myself."

JOHN PERRY

'Reviver Gene' is out now on Mute. Spread It Around is out 12 January.

NOW THAT'S WHAT / CALL MUSIC

a monthly catalogue of filth from the world of rock'n'roll

THE PRODIGY

It was Chumbawamba who first reacted to the Prods' intention to release 'Smack My Bitch Up' as a single, by claiming they'd fashioned a ditty called 'Smack My Keith Up'. Meanwhile, the would-be techno terrors upset maiden aunts from Broadstairs to Bridlington by letting it be known that their promo-video included busty beauties, randies in raincoats watching lewd acts and glorious technicolour barfing. All in the line of the usual, yawn-provoking naughtiness that bands get up to when they want to be acclaimed as the vilest men in pop – a ploy utilised back in the '60s by Arthur Brown, whose "I am the God of Hell-fire" line The Prodigy ripped off for their 'Fire' single. Rumours that their next video will include someone whispering "bum" have been hotly denied.

NEW YORK DOLLS

The rumour-room has it that the Dolls might re-form. This could prove tricky, however. Guitarist/vocalist Johnny Thunders OD'd in 1991, while drummer Jerry Nolan died from a stroke in 1992, emulating original drummer Billy Murcia, who drowned in his bath 20 years earlier. Which leaves guitarist/pianist/vocalist Sylvain Sylvain, bassist Arthur Kane and singer David Johansen. Still, you never can tell with a band made up of former porn star Johansen (star of such movies as *Studs On Main Street* and *Bike Boy Goes Ape*), Kane (who was once tied up by a cutie who tried to cut his thumb off) and Sylvain, who went solo to record the unforgettable 'I Love A Little Pussy'.

LITTLE WILLIE JOHN

Little Willie was one of James Brown's idols and was even the subject of a JB tribute album, *Thinking About Little Willie John*. Barely five feet tall, Willie turned out hits like 'Fever' (the song covered by Peggy Lee) and 'Leave My Kitten Alone', a biggie with '60s British beat-groups. But Willie blew his cool when Brown and his Famous Flames upstaged him at the Harlem Apollo, in front of Little Willie's home crowd. However, the Soul Godfather never realised just how mad Willie could get until one night in the early '60s when the little man stabbed someone to death in a Seattle club brawl. Convicted of manslaughter, he was banged up in Washington State Pen. And he never came out, dying of pneumonia, in 1968, aged 31.

FRED DELLAR

PHOTOS: REDFERNS

albums reviewed by cheeky ctd...

Venom: Cast In Stone (SPV)
I had Venom come knocking on my door the other week. "Do you want to buy a *Watchtower*?" they said. "Not really," I replied. "Fair enough," they said, "but you'd really feel a lot better if you let the light of Jesus into your life. By the way, we're having a jumble sale..." A bit creepy, but well turned-out.

Shane Richie: You're Hurting Our Ears, Mister (Polygram)
You know how Shane's married to one of the Nolan Sisters? I've had her. During my summer season in Windermere. Couldn't keep her hands off me. Then again, Shane's cover album (*Hall & Oates, Hootie & The Blowfish*) is genius. Still, I shouldn't imagine that's much consolation for Shane.

Various: And They Danced The Night Away, Vol. II (Debutante)
D-d-d-d-d-d-d-d-DIZZY!! Basically, the Best Disco Album in the world... ever, on two big shiny compact discs, so you don't need to get up. 'Celebration' by Kool & The Gang, 'Rasputin' by Boney M, 'I.O.U.' by Freeez. Play that funky music, overwhelmingly black boys. Cool.

"Oh those Russians!"

Close Encounters of the Funky Kind

Various: Blaxploitation, Vol III (Global)
'Move On Up', 'One Nation...' all that gubbins. Big collars, bitches, hats, feet, Citröen 2CV's, canteen of cutlery, flat in Chiswick, Christmas cards painted by the disabled. Where's Shaft now? Working in a dry cleaners in Leicester, that's where. Not so hard now, is he? Great album, though.

Various: Tibetan Freedom Concert (Grand Royal)
Fucking bellyaching pop stars (Beck, Blur, Radiohead) whine on about dead monks and abused yaks. Good thing if you ask me. Bane of my life, monks, with their orange robes and their chunky gold sovereign rings, knocking me out of trees with a broom. Revenge shall be mine.

What we're listening to

1 **Some bloke on a Hammond** – 'Eye Level'
2 **MC Lunatic** – 'Block Fucking Beats'
3 **The Verve** – *Northern Soul*
4 **Black Grape** – Oooooooohh!
5 **The buzzer from the street**
6 **KC & The Sunshine Band** – 'That's The Way I Like It'
7 **Baby Bird feat Derek Harbinson** – 'Too Handsome To Be Homeless'
8 **Weather Girls** – 'It's Raining Men'
9 **Speed Pipe** – 'Highland Fling'
10 **Aphrodite's Child** – *666*

Beck: quite a lot like a Dalai Llama

REVIEWS CONTINUE PG 177

The cream of the finest introspective tracks, on one definitive album...

Grace - Not Over Yet, **Underworld** - Pearls Girl, **Double 99** - RIP Groove, **Jaydee** - Plastic Dreams, **Brainbug** - Nightmare, **Hyper Trophy** - Just Come Back To Me, **FSOL** - Papua New Guinea, **Underworld** - Cowgirl, **Sash** - Ecuador, **Lisa Stansfield** - The Line, **Rosie Gaines** - Closer Than Close, **Revival 3000** - Mighty High, **Westbam** - Sonic Empire, **Westbam** - Sunshine, **Chicane** - Offshore '97, **Leftfield** - Song Of Life, **Isha-D** - Stay, **Gisselle Jackson** - Love Commandments, **Duke** - So In Love With You, **Kim English** - Learn To Love, **Moonman** - Don't Be Afraid, **Soundscape** - Dubplate Culture, **Cafe Del Mar** - Energy 52, **Lustral** - Everytime, **Laguna** - Spiller From Rio, **Sourmash** - Pilgimage To Paradise, **Rio-Rhythm** - A Little Closer, **FSFD** - FSFD, **Future Sound Of London** - Papua New Guinea, **Rhyme Thyme Productions** - You & Me, **Lemon Project** - Peppermint Lounge, **Phunk Force** - Mind Games

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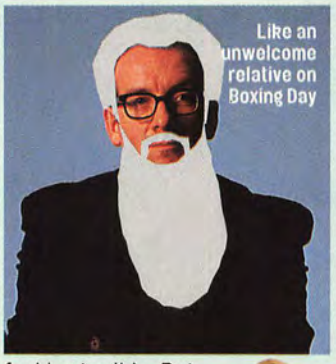
albums reviewed by cheeky ctd...

CHEEKY'S CHRISTMAS CRACKERS
Cheeky's baubles get an extra shine for:

Bobby Rodriguez: Latin Jazz Christmas (Uphonium)
Bongos, trumpets, margaritas and a ludicrous ukelele solo bring generous ladles of steaming turkey juice dribbling all down the happy, smiling, Cherubic faces of all God's little children, even if Bobby does insist on sticking his sprouts in a fajita and mangling the bird with his extra piquant salsa.

Elvis' Dad Sings Elvis (Hallmark)
Fucking terrible. Not Elvis' Dad at all, but Elvis Costello's dad, ferchrissakes. Imagine Vic Reeves murdering Da King 'In The Club Style'. Stupendously, ridiculously



fucking terrible. But ideal for a good old family singsong during the Queen's Speech. Go out and buy it.

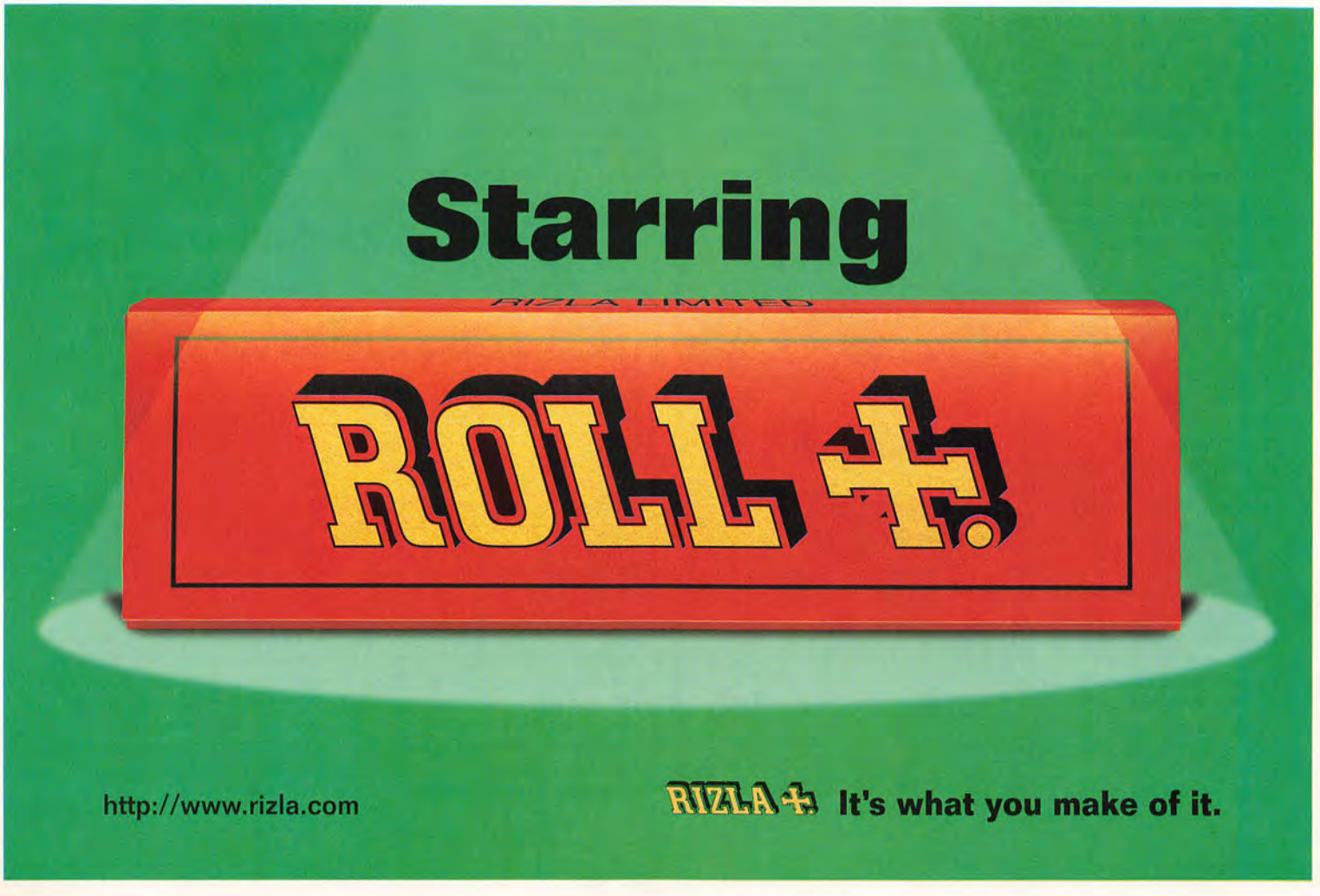
The Sellers Engineering Band: A Brass Band Christmas (Hallmark)
Like a small boy in clogs pushing a bicycle up a cobbled hill, his basket full of warm bread, his heart full of innocent anticipation for what the festive season holds for him. Sadly, he gets rickets and spends the rest of his life with legs like Sydney Harbour Bridge. A lovely Northern Christmas, then.

Various: Merry Axemas (Epic)
A load of washed up guitar-playing has-beens like Jeff Beck and Brian 'Stray Cats' Setzer sneak into your bedroom at night and steal all your presents, replacing them with shit widdly versions of 'Jingle Bells' and 'The Little Drummer Boy'. Really not the same as that duck-shaped hairdryer you've been waiting for all year. Meanies.

The Hammond Organ: Hits A La Hammond (Hallmark)
Like a gay pig rolling around in the shit of your mind. They've got spiral cocks, you know. I had one in the back of my cab the other day. Shat all over. Bad pig, bad.

The Freddy Williams Four: Best of Barbershop (Turnip)
Unaccompanied four-part close harmony at its very best. And not only do Freddy and his mates sing classics like 'Bye Bye Blackbird', they even take the trouble to wax their ginormous moustaches right to the ends. I do that with my ears, you know.

Gilbert O'Sullivan: Singer Sowing Machine (Park)
Gilbert's back! In that case I want a space hopper, an Action Man with gripping hands and a Scalextric for Christmas. Or I shall cry like a girl.



THE SOPHISTICATION STATION

Modern classics for the person who doesn't have time to bugger about

the video

The Last Detail, Hal Ashby, 1974, BMG, £6.99

Nowadays he's the ultimate pantomime turn – the balloon-shaped, all-American ogre and much-beloved booze and babe-fuelled Hollywood rogue king. But Jack Nicholson only got to be Jack The Hack after years of hard graft, blistering presence and manic invention. A shot of vintage Jack is just the tonic for any who query the great man's pre-eminence, and Buddusky – the navy lifer he played in1974's *The Last Detail* – is just that.

Lean and sly, funny and complex, always with a cigar in his hand and a glint of menace in his eyes, Jack's Buddusky is the dynamo in director Hal Ashby's freewheeling improvisational style, and exactly the foil Randy Quaid's galumping, baby-faced kleptomaniac Meadows needs as he's transported to the slammer to serve an eight-year sentence for robbing $40 from a charity box. Who better than Jack to give the kid a few life lessons before the prison gates close?

PHOTOS: RONALD GRANT

Classic Jack scenes abound, like when he pulls out a gun and tells the racist bartender, "I am the motherfucking shore patrol!", or when he tells Meadows about the one-eyed whore who used to "wink fellas off", or, having recently described a well-known euphemism for cunnilingus, yodels hysterically as the kid is led away by a chanting Buddhist music business chick at a party.

The Last Detail is one of those maverick, slice-of-life black comedies that could only have got made in the '70s. And though there's excellent support from Quaid and Otis Young (who plays Buddusky's fellow escort), it survives as a classic almost solely because of the lightning imagination and molten energy of jumping Jack Nicholson.

Unbeatable. Really. **GM**

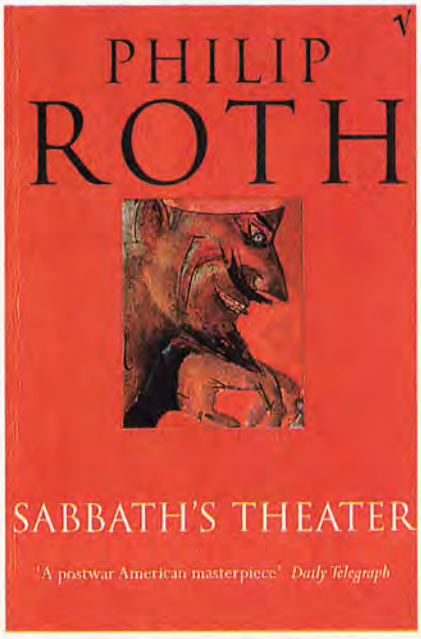
the book

Sabbath's Theater, Philip Roth, Vintage, £6.99

Mention Philip Roth in your local literary circle and some bright spark will inevitably say, "Didn't he write the book about wanking?" To be sure, *Portnoy's Complaint*, the author's debut, was a hairy-palmed classic – an examination of one man's sex fantasies writ large and run riot. And there is a fair amount of seed-spilling and runaway fantasies in *Sabbath's Theater*, too. But, 30 years on from Portnoy, they're made part of a Gothic nightmare, a trip into the demented mind of a gruesome lech, mocked by time and played for a fool by fate. What drives it along and makes it so darkly captivating is the unseemly skill and almost unbearable eloquence Roth brings to his savagely comic tale.

Mikey Sabbath is an ageing, arthritic, former finger-theatre puppeteer. Haunted by the ghost of his long-dead mother, seething with hatred for the Japanese who killed his brother in the war, he spends every waking hour trying to get inside the pants of any woman (aged cleaning lady, his friend's teenage daughter, a mental patient) who comes into his perverted, self-gratifying orbit. Thrown out of the house by his wife (a recovering alcoholic), jerking off over the grave of his recently deceased mistress, he spirals out of control, determined to alienate anyone who tries to sympathise or 'understand'.

Few books this decade have sustained themselves with such a ferociously funny attack – Roth keeps the outrages going right up until the final word; with one of the best endings to any novel you'll ever read. Not bad, for a wanker. **GM**



the cd

Forever Changes, Love, Elektra, £7.99

It's 1967, the summer of love. Kids run wild in the streets, party naked in drug-induced frenzies, drop out, tune in, wear flowers in their hair. They do anything, in fact, to avoid coming to terms with *Forever Changes*, the masterpiece of the era; the ultimate acid album and the record which, 30 years later, is the great lasting monument to that overrated time.

Star-crossed genius Arthur Lee, a black man in a white rock world, had been one of the earliest names on the burgeoning LA rock scene. A self-proclaimed genius, he liked to claim that, before Jimi Hendrix hopped ship to Blighty, he taught him everything there was to know about wooing the rock world. By the time Arthur's group Love came to make their third album, The Byrds and The Doors had put Los Angeles on the map. As he'd discovered The Doors for Elektra, it was only fair that the company should give Lee plenty of money and time so he could get the finest LSD, to help him make an album that would blow them all away.

The thing was, *Forever Changes* was simply too good. Even now it sounds unlike any album ever recorded. Lee's elusive, maddeningly brilliant lyrics conjure up images of startling clarity, interspersed with a range of mind-blitzing hallucinations. The music, combining Arthur's geetar fury with mellifluous orchestration and heart-melting melodies with mariachi horn, is exotic and heroic, insane and divine. No wonder, then, that when Neil Young turned up to jam at the sessions, Arthur told him to stick his 'axe' where the sun don't shine.

Released in the shadow of *Sgt Pepper*, *Forever Changes* barely scraped the Hot 100, but has sold steadily ever since. Lee, currently serving time on firearms charges in LA, has valiantly attempted but inevitably failed to reach its transcendental heights ever since. But then, so has everybody else.

GAVIN MARTIN

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Sun GOES BEHIND THE SCENES OF SHOCK SHOW
THEY HAD SEX WITH 40 MEN IN TWO WEEKS... THEY MUST BE BONKERS
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Shocking TV confessions
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THE ANNUAL SEX OLYMPICS ARE ALWAYS HELD ON IBIZA MEET BRITAIN'S GOLD MEDALLIST
WE BEDDED
We're not

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18

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Who's your favourite DJ? Pete Tongue, arf arf

This man has Red Stripe on tap

"It's alright, girls, I'm married anyway"

"Got any speed garage?"

"You can't stop me, I'm a party ani...zzzzz"

Notts crackers sweet

Nottingham: a forest of new clubs full of merry men and women

Back in the 1300s, Nottingham was allegedly overrun by a hostile cult of tree-men. They lived like Tarzans in forest communes, wearing their gang colours of Lincoln green. The olde rumour has it that they attained guru-like status amongst the peasantry in their class war struggle against the Norman aristocracy; subjecting them to armed robbery, arrows, coach-jacking and adultery. Nowadays, the less-contentious myth amongst the East Midlands' club dwellers holds that Nottingham boasts a lust-favourable girl/boy ratio of five to one. Unfortunately, that's bollocks, too. Unless you're over 75.

Back on Earth, it's Friday night and we are here to explore the nightlife renaissance Nottingham is undergoing. Our first drink in the hotel is served by a gracious old barmaid with a classic '50s beehive. Everyone in the bar is, though not quite as fancy as her, just as old. Could this Notts club-uprising be a grey-revival? Back-to-'59 parties where the old folk run the denturetheques "my way"?

We leave and meet up with exuberant clubland impresario James Baillie, at the Cross Keys pub near the clothing emporium of Nottingham's most famous designer, Paul Smith. On a moderately different level to Smith, James is responsible for this town's foremost legendary clubland experience, Venus. This happened way back in the early '90s when people happily pulled faces and danced with themselves while facing the DJ. His latest venture, ominously entitled The Bomb, will be our last dance on tonight's disco jamboree, with a stretch-limo home, courtesy of St John's.

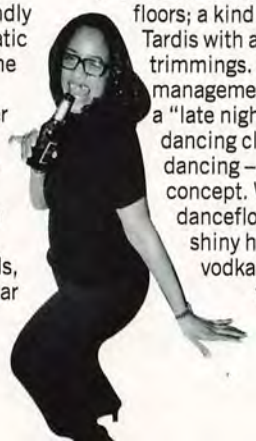
This is well-heeled hedonism, with no one tossing off over the DJ's shoulder

Back on the dark, narrow, winding side streets, reminiscent of Led Zeppelin's *Physical Graffiti* LP cover, we enter The Establishment. This is one of the new, stylish food and drink mega-bars in Nottingham's centre, set on two floors with all the latest tunes, chairs, lighting etc... From here we venture back into the traditional pint-glass setting of the Old Angel Inn. We meet a friendly Antichrist skateboard fanatic – the manager. He's had the floor painted with a giant Twister board which, under the right influence, could easily be misconstrued as some arcane device of alchemy or even a devilish Ouijaboard.

"Drink this," he demands, handing over a glass of clear liquid. Overwhelmed by the sight of his upside-down cross, the Mickey Finn paranoia surfaces with a mouthful of bile. Luckily, both turn out to be nothing more than pure vodka. We leave after this and pay a visit to Wax, another new bar with a DJ mixing up the funk and hip-hop. Here we encounter a band of merry DJs preparing their livers for the monthly Heavenly Jukebox shakedown at Baillie's Bomb club. This Shamanic pre-dance boozing is often the tell-tale sign of turntable craftsmanship. Rumour has it that, when it comes to mixing records, there is nothing more useful than a skinful of professionalism.

We leave behind this sanctified razzle and visit the new Lizard Lounge. It has a deceptively small entrance which gives way to three floors; a kind of nouveau-fancy Tardis with all the posh trimmings. According to the management, it doubles up as a "late night drinking and dancing club". Drinking and dancing – a fascinating new concept. Whatever next? The dancefloor is jammed with shiny househeads, the vodka bar dangerously tempting, and the excellent low-lit restaurant, wall-papered with Chinese bank notes, buzzes with the smooth folk-rock-pop voice of live singer Roy De'Wired. It serves a well-recommended scrambled egg and salmon on expensive toast which, against the odds of disco-science, will hopefully sit well with the beans.

So far, by the looks of things, everybody gets groovy early round these parts. This is the case at yet another bustling nightclub, The Beatroot, with its long-running Hot Butter night. Both the indie floor and the 'breakbeat-funk-jazz-and-every-track-you've-ever-heard-on-Wall-Of-Sound-and-Skint-records room' hosted by DJ Wrighty is pumping. "Pumping" now being the operative word and no longer restricted to the house clubs, because finger-dancing has been official relegated to the tabloid gabba scene while hips are now humping their way back across the dancefloors.



PHOTOS: ANTHONY CULLEN

Dance Floors

The Bomb, 45 Bridlesmiths Gate. Tel: 0171 482 5488
The Beatroot, Lace Market. Tel: 0115 985 6580
Lizard Lounge, 41-43 St Mary's Gate. Tel: 0115 952 3264
Essence, Goldsmith Street. Tel: 0115 941 0977
Deluxe/Club 22, 22 St James Street. Tel: 0468 490 252
The Ballroom, Lenton Boulevard. Tel: 0115 942 2792
The House, Huntingdon Street. Tel: 0115 956 5324

Woman with strange growth on her arse

SERIOUS FREAK DOWN

...and another one. It must be in the water

The things people have to do for a drink of water

You've stretched that top enough already

"Do you think this shirt's too short?"

Easy tiger

On the whole, Nottingham is, in the pretentious technical terms of nightlife, one of the new wave of post-superclub towns. In the grim shadow of Hellawellian prohibition, it's good to find new bars and discos smelling of paint, plaster and freshly cut and polished wooden floors. Eventually, we reach The Bomb. Yet another new gaff, with softly illuminated white icing-sugar walls which makes you think you're inside a giant three-storey cake full of wriggling people, topped with a luscious roof garden.

"This is like Ibiza in the Midlands," reckons the authentically-hooded Robin from Heavenly, one of tonight's guest DJs. Tucked away upstairs in the loft, Robin and deck-spar Little Nick mix a unique full-on, binge-fuelled blend of speed garage and heavy metal. Heading down the hairy carpet stairs, past top band The Hybirds and various other glitterati dancing around, to a room where Lionrock's Justin Robertson and his mate, DJ Richard Hector-Jones QC, are making the Sherwood forest of people leap like crazy club squirrels to their brilliant, eclectic selection.

Even further down the hairy stairs we reach the final level. "I can't find God," shouts **loaded** photographer Anthony, mysteriously, his right eye squeezed shut and the left focussing through a camera lens at the face of DJ Kelvin Andrews of Candy Flip fame. Kelvin's downbeat funky tunes capture that old-style Balearic kind of vibe with today's new beats and wired electronic funk. Luckily, the crowd aren't just going through the motions of the past either; no more swigging other people's water or bland chomping in front of a light fitting. This is well-heeled hedonism, appreciative of the diverse music without anyone tossing-off over a DJ's shoulder whilst record-spotting.

The man responsible for this new buzz, James Baillie, has disappeared. Quite possibly lost to the forces of nightlife; abducted by jealous drunken club bores and dragged back to some purple-painted student hovel to quaff Merrydown and listen to Morrissey. I've met DJs who've suffered in this way and no amount of counselling or mood-altering legal drugs can help. Once damaged, they end up going the wrong way; dancing in denial along the rainbow path, following the flyers to Goa, swallowing love-lentils and wigging-out in nameless student bars... I think it must be time to go home.

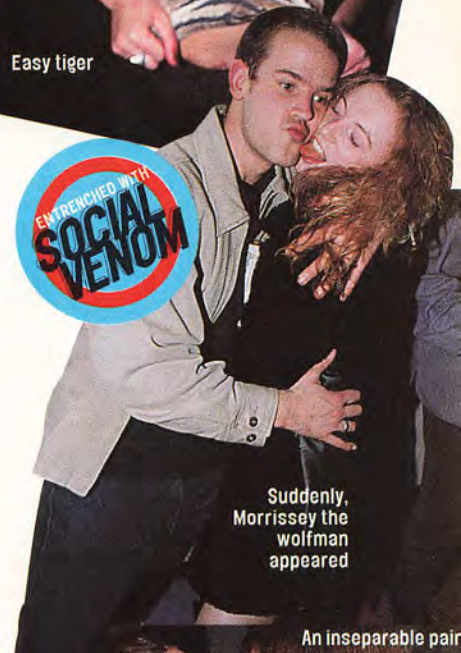
ROWAN CHERNIN

Watering Holes

Cross Keys, Fletcher Gate
The Establishment, Broadway
Wax, 27 Broad Street
The Old Angel Inn, Stoney Street

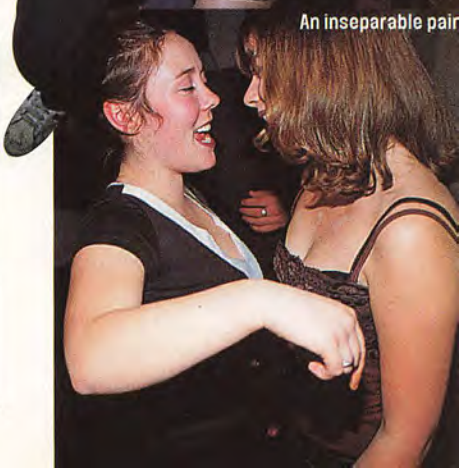
DiY

Nottingham-based sound system party organisers DiY have just released their new LP, *2922 Days*, on DiY Discs. From Castlemorton to Café del Mar, it's taken them 2,922 days of being arrested, travelling the world, organising free parties and being arrested for having parties, before they finally got round to putting down some of their favourite, quality house tunes on one LP.



ENTRENCHED WITH SOCIAL VENOM

Suddenly, Morrissey the wolfman appeared



An inseparable pair

THE BRAHMS & SLEIGHLIST

Who's playing what you want and where...

The Office Party – From pig pen to bloke with droopy jowls, everyone gets a shag at Christmas. It's the season of good balls-in, so make sure your stomach is full of carrot and the whisky-flavoured condoms are back in the wallet. Beware of rugby boy bonding types, they'll mount anyone this time of year. Recommended top five:

1 Gloria Gaynor 'I Will Survive'
2 Cher 'The Shoop Shoop Song'
3 Frank Sinatra 'My Way'
4 Elvis Presley 'Love Me Tender'
5 Jimmy Ruffin 'What Becomes Of The Broken Hearted'

The School Disco – Stuff porn behind the radiators and enforce the Criminal Justice Act to prevent the girls hanging around in gangs of six. Avoid amyl in the smoke machine at all costs. Recommended:

1 Spandau Ballet 'True'
2 George Michael 'Careless Whisper'
3 Europe 'Final Count Down'
4 Steve Walsh 'I Found Loving'
5 Damian 'The Timewarp2'

House Party – Smash up the house and call the police. Don't forget to hang a bunch of misanthropes by their balls from the lampshades and watch the lovers join lips like magnets of Xmas joy. Recommended top five:

1 Dreem Teem In Session Vol II
2 187 Lockdown Presents Sunday Flavaz Volume One
3 Speed Freaks
4 Power House UK Speed Garage Vol 1
5 UK Garage Fever

Plastic Food Containers Party – Suburban wife-swapping excuse with Satanic plastic tubs full of drugs. Watch out for vomit and keep it air-tight fresh for further capers.

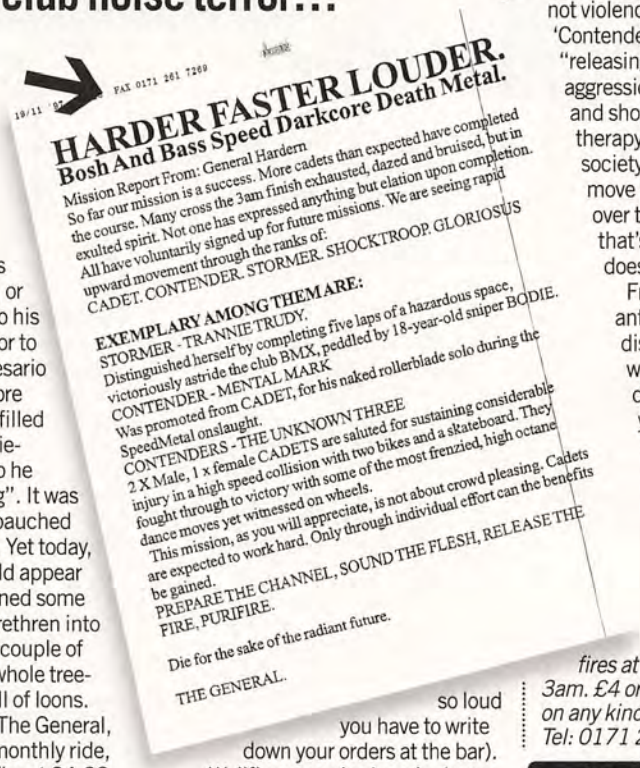
Also, look out for the inhumane suffocation of small pets and death by burning plastic. Recommended top five:

1 'Living In A Box' Living In A Box
2 'Knees Up Mother Brown' Traditional
3 'Donald Where's Your Troosers' Andy Stewart
4 'Eightsome Reel' Traditional
5 'Roll Out The Barrel' Traditional

Pardon?

Extreme club noise terror...

First off, this fax arrived in the office:



FAX 0171 261 7269

HARDER FASTER LOUDER.
Bosh And Bass Speed Darkcore Death Metal.

Mission Report From: General Hardern
Mission is a success. More cadets than expected have completed the course. Many cross the 3am finish exhausted, dazed and bruised, but in exulted spirit. Not one has expressed anything but elation upon completion. So far our mission is a success. More cadets than expected have completed All have voluntarily signed up for future missions. We are seeing rapid upward movement through the ranks of:
CADET. CONTENDER. STORMER. SHOCKTROOP. GLORIOSUS

EXEMPLARY AMONG THEM ARE:
STORMER - TRANNIE TRUDY.
Distinguished herself by completing five laps of a hazardous space, victoriously astride the club BMX, peddled by 18-year-old sniper BODIE.
CONTENDER - MENTAL MARK
Was promoted from CADET, for his naked rollerblade solo during the SpeedMetal onslaught.
CONTENDERS - THE UNKNOWN THREE
2 X Male, 1 x female CADETS are saluted for sustaining considerable injury in a high speed collision with two bikes and a skateboard. They fought through to victory with some of the most frenzied, high octane dance moves yet witnessed on wheels.
This mission, as you will appreciate, is not about crowd pleasing. Cadets are expected to work hard. Only through individual effort can the benefits be gained.
PREPARE THE CHANNEL, SOUND THE FLESH, RELEASE THE FIRE, PURIFIRE.

Die for the sake of the radiant future.

THE GENERAL.

If you hadn't already guessed, this is from a club promoter. He is known on earth as Matthew Harden, or General Harden to his new converts. Prior to that he was impresario Matthew Glammore from the popstar-filled London glam-indie-trash-kitsch-disco he called "Smashing". It was as reasonably debauched as any other club. Yet today, cult-insanity would appear to have finally turned some of the clubland brethren into genuine ravers; a couple of trunks short of a whole tree-hugging forest-full of loons.

In the words of The General, the doors at this monthly ride, "Load at 23.00, fire at 24.00, then fall out three hours later."

HARDER FASTER LOUDER is a night where they recommend you bring earplugs (overly load sound-systems can cause tinnitus), protective clothing (trannies on BMXs don't stop for no fucker), and a notepad (it's so loud you have to write down your orders at the bar). Wallflowers arrive here in droves to lose their petals of shiny club-pride in a dirty smog of sound. Bosh And Bass Speed Darkcore Death Metal is an aural peversity which can be crudely translated as hell. A professional mix of Death Metal, industrial techno, noise, screaming (from the crowd), hardcore black power music played back to back with white power old school skinhead music.

"It's about expressing anger and not violence," explains Kim (a 'Contender', apparently). "releasing it, all the build-up of aggression, everybody screams and shouts, it feels like the therapy you need in today's society. You can't help but move physically, you're given over to involuntary spasms, that's what the music does to you."

From a purely anthropological discotheque point of view, what you don't know you don't need to know. If you are not sure, try speed garage.

ROWAN CHERNIN

Harder Faster Louder drops on the last Thursday of every month at The Office, Rathbone Place, London. It loads at 11pm, fires at 12am and falls out at 3am. £4 or free for anyone on any kind of wheels. Tel: 0171 278 5486.

The Noises of influence

1 Boeing engine
2 Formula 1 gearbox
3 Taxi breaks
4 Road drill
5 Machine gun
6 Three-minute warning siren
7 Bomb blast

PHOTOS: JULIE BENTLEY @ THE GUEST LIST

YOU DANCIN'?

records you're always too messed up to ask the name of

alien happy moody mad techno blunted cool trainspotter

Atlas Earthed Various Artists (Jumpin & Pumpin)
From London's temple of sound, Atlas Records, rises a sonic phoenix. The compilation includes a number of underground, overground and wombling free esoteric tracks.

187 Lockdown Presents Sunday Flavaz Volume One (Logic Records)
187 Lockdown mix together all their favourite Flavaz. From the newly explored pantry they called 'speed garage' emerges a compilation of speed garage. Fast garage drum patterns, junglist basslines, timestretched vocal samples, some plinky-plonky pianos... Oh, it's a London thing.

Speed Freaks (High On Rhythm)
From the Pandora's record box they called 'speed garage' emerges a compilation of speed garage. Fast garage drum

patterns, junglist basslines, timestretched vocal samples, some plinky-plonky pianos... Oh, it's a London thing.

Dreem Teem In Session Vol II (Deconstruction)
Radio One Ibiza babies renowned for 'The Theme' hit mix a clutch of tracks very large. From under Buddha's tree landed a groove they called speed garage. Now we have on this CD a grand collection of fast garage drum patterns, junglist basslines, timestretched vocal samples, some plinky-plonky pianos... Oh, it's a London thing.

Power House UK Speed Garage Vol 1 (Powerhouse Recordings)
Nigel Benn and DJ Ride have larged together a mix compilation from the newly explored toolbox of speed garage. Lots of fast garage drum patterns, junglist basslines, timestretched vocal samples, some plinky-plonky pianos... Oh, it's a London thing.

Nightfever (Global)
A love-fest collection of hits from the '70s, funk, disco, rare groove, and any scene which has involved wearing wigs, flares and moustaches. It's not a London thing.

React Test Seven (React)
A compilation of pumping, pump-pump-pumper arms in the air tunes alongside some fat large breakbeat and trip-hop malarkey.

Pete Tong Essential Selection (Polygram)
Eclectic. Dance. Tong. Solid.

DJ Hype presents True Playaz In The Mix Vol 1 (True Playaz)
A continuous mixed compilation of fast jungle drum patterns, junglist basslines, timestreched vocal samples, scratching, swishy strings, astral effects and jazzy bits.

Sir Drew 'Let's Get Some Girls' (Athletico Records)
From the high street blues of Stafford comes the unique sound of San Fran-disco, shaken-up with hip-hop and a touch of early '80s electro to create a funky beat built to test your trainers.

Ballistic Brothers 'A Love Supreme' (Soundboy)
Coltrane's classic gets funk-rocketed out into a sacramental dancefloor odyssey with the B-side remixed around into a brass-accompanied house track by the Celtic god of beer, the Black Science Orchestra.

Dylan Rhymes 'Humphead EP' (Junior Boys Own)
Big beat electronic bee swarm music: "Ideal for rock fans on E," says podium dancer Adam Porter (Nerd Editor).

2 Fat Buddhas Vs Fat-Head 'Into Battle EP' (Freskanova)
This DJ wrestle over moving turntables results in old skool hip-hop, with a dash of electro, bass as wide as a dancefloor and a couple of frantic breakbeat tracks ending up on 12 inches of vinyl. Now that's magic.

ROWAN CHERNIN

TECH NO

WE TALK CLEARLY ABOUT EVERYDAY ELECTRONICS.

?

Tandy

YOU'VE GOT QUESTIONS.
WE'VE GOT ANSWERS.

BRA

THE PERFECT CHRISTMAS GIFT

ACTUAL SIZE OF COMPACT DISC IS 4 3/4" (12.4 cm) x 5 1/2" (14.2 cm). Stand, lace doyley and tasteful nick-nacks not included.

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BENTLEY RHYTHM ACE
See Inlay For Details
7243 8 21049 2 6
01: let there be flutes. 02: midiander <there can only be one...>.
03: why is a frog too...? 04: mind that gap. 05: run on the spot.
06: Bentleys gonna sort you out! 07: ragtopskodacarchase.
08: whoosh. 09: who put the bom in the bom bom diddleye bom.
10: spacehopper. 11: return of the hardcore jumble carbootechnodisco roadshow.
Parlophone

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Got any Candy Flip?

All rise for Judge Jules – the house DJ with a law degree and the latest dance guru to join Pete Tong on Radio One blows his own bugle

Where did you first DJ?
When I was 16, around 1983, in North London. I used to put on parties for 13- to 16-year-olds at any venue that would have us.

What was on the decks, then?
A fusion of rather tacky disco, late new wave and electro.

Why did you want to be a DJ?
When you're young, it's cool to have the biggest record collection. But as you get older, it starts to look more and more anal and anoraky, and you have to sell your services to finance your habit.

Ever been a mobile DJ or owned those three traffic lights in a box which flash in time to the beat?
I didn't have the decks, just the records. I was a mobile DJ without the flashing lights and without a shagging-van. Mobile DJs need to have a van to go and copulate in. My uncle, who's now famous TV seafood chef Rick Stein, was originally a mobile DJ.

Rick Stein was a mobile DJ?
He had a VW hippy camper van with his mobile gear in the back and flashing traffic lights, too.

Why did he give up the DJing?
He owned a nightclub in Cornwall, and because there were so many fisherman fighting each other there, it lost its licence. He became a restaurateur and started cooking.

What's been your best DJing experience?
My last birthday at Gatecrasher in Sheffield; I had 2,000 people singing 'Happy Birthday'. The huge raves of the late '80s were special, seeing the little acorn of dance music develop into a huge oak tree in the form of these vast orbital raves. Plus realising that I'd DJ'd in all five continents; getting on Radio One, and when Kiss FM received its legal status.

Worst experience?
When somebody poured lighter fluid on the record while it was playing. It caught fire and burnt a huge hole in it. It must have looked very funny for the people watching but it sent me round the fucking twist. I've also had someone steal a record while it's been playing at some ridiculous underground party on Gray's Inn Road. They just ran off laughing.

"I was a mobile DJ without the flashing lights or a shagging van"

Which is easier, DJing in clubs or on the radio?
In a club you've almost got to have a chemical ability to gauge people's reactions, whereas being a radio DJ and presenter, you have to be fluent and confident. There's a lot of very decent club DJs who'd be incapable when it came to fluent conversation and fluent dialogue.

In your experience, which is the best club in the country?
Gatecrasher in Sheffield. It combines a really dressy crowd with a really good atmosphere.

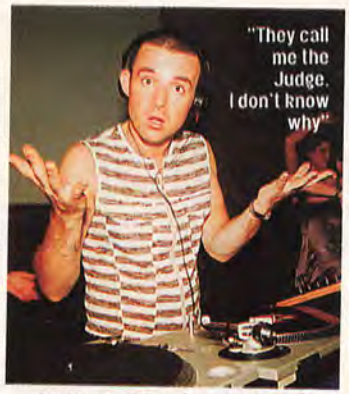
Do you get stalked by trainspotters watching the records go round?
I'd rather tell somebody what a track is called than let them suffer the indignity of watching a record go round and round. Andrew Weatherall used to write on records, "Go away you nosey bastard." He ended up having even more nosey bastards staring at him.

Got any Candy Flip in your record box?
The best and most enduring thing to come out of Candy Flip was Kelvin Andrews and his DJing career. I didn't buy any of Candy Flip's records but I probably got sent one.

What about the essentials, like speed garage?
Speed garage is a 'Ploughman's Lunch' type term – ploughmen don't eat a Ploughman's Lunch. But by the definition of speed garage, yeah, I probably would play a bit.

Judge Jules' Top 10

1 **Treat Infamy** (on acetate)
2 **Camisra** 'Let Me Show U'
3 **Runaway's Revenge** (on bootleg)
4 **RIP** 'Ice Cream Dub'
5 **The Police** 'Walking On The Moon (Roger Sanchez Mixes)'
6 **Da Hool** 'Meet Her At The Love Parade (Dextrous remix)'
7 **Viper** 'Titty Twister'
8 **'Brutal' Bill Marquez** 'Sweat'
9 **Karlton** 'Terrordome'
10 **BBE** 'Desire (French Triangle)'



Heard any new slang terms in the clubs recently, things like 'Radio Rental' or 'Vitamin Cs'?
Gary Abletts and Bumble Bees.

What do we need more of in clubs?
Blokes making an effort to dress up. I'm not just a superficial, shallow fuck, but at the same time it's all too easy for geezers just to go out in a fucking fake Ralph Lauren button-down shirt. If I ran a club, I'd have a no button-down shirt policy.

Seen anything strange or paranormal on the dancefloor recently?
Cheerleader types with messages. I saw this happen at Milton Keynes. A line of blokes were each holding a different letter and spelling words like TUNE or UNITE. It's good when there's a bit of fun to be had instead of anal blokes in their anoraks with tightly clenched butt cheeks.

Do you have problems with groupies chasing after you?
The ugliest of DJs can pick up women, which makes you realise it's nothing to do with your looks, more to do with your status. That does tend to debase the whole groupie issue. But yes, sex is there when you want it... but I don't particularly want it. I find it all a bit hollow.

Are you the next Pete Tong?
There was this strange rumour going around for a couple of years that I would take over from Pete Tong. I'm now on after him on Fridays and on before Danny Rampling on Saturdays. So I've got my own place without it being at the expense of anybody else, which is good.

Will you be dressing up as Santa and giving your records away this Christmas?
That's a good idea. I get sent about 300 promos a week, 20 or 30 of which will be useable, so there's some scope for giving out free ones. Any opportunity to buy some popularity.

ROWAN CHERNIN

You can hear Judge Jules' show on Radio One on Friday nights 9-11pm and on Saturday evenings 5-7.

MANGA

not for everyone

She may have been a cartoon cyborg, but I had a full-on Robo chubby.

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http//www.manga.com

(left) There's almost no ailment known to man that can't be cured by a handy nurse in a miniskirt. This is Jennifer, a dancer at the Park Plaza Hotel in downtown LA. (right) Outside the Adult Video News Halloween party at the Palace, Hollywood, it looks like Shell Peney (left) and Sindee Cox (right) are about to make their entrance

GETTING AWAY WITH IT

a photo-diary of the weird and wonderful by derek ridgers

(left) "Is that a black pudding in your pants or are you just pleased to see me?" I almost asked Tipi from Finland at the Torture Garden. (right) Getting some air in the hot LA night, it's porno superstar Shane at the AVN party

Film of the month

"Come on then, I'll take you all on" (*Alien Resurrection*)

Here's Alien IV

And Sigourney Weaver, back from the dead

Alien Resurrection
The fourth stomach-splitting *Alien* movie with Sigourney Weaver and Winona Ryder.
***Alien IV*? Didn't Sigourney Weaver die at the end of the last one, wiping out the Alien species in the process?** How naive you are. Do you really think Hollywood would kill off such a lucrative movie franchise?
But surely... Look, it's all something to do with the dastardly Company wanting the alien for research and cloning Ripley (Weaver) from DNA, complete with the alien embryo that had taken root inside her in *Alien 3*. With the result that Ripley, previously more neurotic than a bag full of coke-addled monkeys any time anyone so much as burped at the breakfast table, is transformed into a half-alien superhuman psychopath who bleeds acid with the best of 'em. Imagine what her periods are like.
And Winona? Cute but very, very wet. The fact that, halfway through the movie, she turns out to be a synthetic (that's robot to you and me) will surprise no one, following a performance that would shame the Tin Man. "More human than human" supposedly.
Anyone else? A bulging, viscous cocoon-full of brilliant hard cases, character actors and scum.
Does it live up to its predecessors? It's better than *Alien 3* which was, quite frankly, poo, and every bit as jump-out-of-yer-seat scary as the others. The special effects, naturally, are the best yet.
Best bits: Aliens that swim. Eggs that hatch. Humans that die. Horribly.
Verdict: 8.8/10
CHRIS BURKE

The Winner
Alex Cox directed this tale of murder, deceit and surreal shenanigans in the casinos of Las Vegas.
Starring: Michael Madsen, Rebecca DeMornay, Billy Bob Thornton, Delroy Lindo, Frank Whaley and Vincent D'Onofrio.
The plot is? A collection of wasters, losers, gangsters and opportunists converge on Las Vegas to exploit a naive but lucky gambler who always cleans up on the roulette wheel when he plays on Sundays. It's directed by Alex Cox, he of *Moviedrome*, *Repo Man* and *Sid And Nancy* fame, so you should expect nothing less than a trip into the strange B-movie hip world of odd filming techniques, damn fine dialogue, screwed up characters and violent situations.
Worth leaving the house for? Definitely. Everyone misbehaves themselves in fine form; Madsen lurks, DeMornay pouts, Whaley slimes, Lindo muses and Cox takes a leaf from Hitchcock and stars briefly in his own film as a camp waiter.
Anything of a vaguely sexual nature? There's a brief foray into the sordid act of copulation in a Liberace museum.
Anything that's just vague? A great deal, including where the plot

"Ooh, that reminds me, I must defrost the fridge" (*The Winner*)

Cop Land
Cops, corruption and revenge in New York with an all-star cast featuring De Niro, Keitel and Liotta, with Sly Stallone in the lead.
Stallone gets to climb the outside of plenty of skyscrapers then? Nope, Sly's gone all *Raging Bull* (the final years) on us. He's porked up, slowed down and started talking garbled. It's *Rocky* plus 10 stone Stallone.
What, no oiled biceps, no laying down the law? *Judge Dredd* this ain't. It's a return to a different, fat form for Sly. He slots in perfectly as the drawling sheriff of Cop Land, a small New Jersey town populated by corrupt

"Don't, er, rush me" (*Cop Land*)

New York cops led by Harvey Keitel. True to form, Keitel is wound up and spitting, Robert De Niro is all intense, menacing grin playing the internal affairs man who needs Sly's help, and Ray Liotta's snorting charlie in the bogs.
So, nothing new from the big guys? The method men deliver a healthy helping of what the people expect. Sly, on the other hand, is excellent as he stumbles around in flip-flops, pining for his childhood sweetheart and listening to old mono LPs 'cos he's deaf in one ear.
Surely Sly kicks ass at some point? Of course he does, and in grand style in a tense and heavily atmospheric confrontation with Keitel's bent coppers.
Any memorable catchphrases? Keitel: "Fuckin' rat!"
De Niro: "You be quiet. You be quiet. You be quiet."
Stallone: "Pardon?"
Verdict: 8/10
DANNY PLUNKETT

"I knew I should have defrosted the fridge" (*I Know What You Did Last Summer*)

came from, which part of the story it's going to start a fight with and why it rides off into the desert at the end of the film on the back of reality?
In one sentence: *Repo Man* gets to stay up late and watch *Pulp Fiction* with lots of chemicals. Weird and wonderful excellence.
Verdict: 8/10
PIERS TOWNLEY

Scary, though: It has its moments, and a fantastic climax, then blows it with what may possibly be the most feeble and spurious tacked-on ending in the history of cinema.
In a nutshell: All is vanity, Satan rules the courts, his slaves get naked a lot.
Verdict: Guilty. Would have got off, but for the last five minutes. **6/10.**
DAVID BENNUN

"Oof, me back!" (*Devil's Advocate*)

The Devil's Advocate

Satan makes a comeback to the big screen. And this time it's legal. A weird combination of *The Omen*, *The Firm*, *Society*, and *Rosemary's Baby*. Keanu Reeves, a small-town defence attorney who's never lost a case, is lured to Sodom (aka New York) by Al Pacino, the head of a huge law corporation. It swiftly becomes apparent that Al is really Old Nick in a suit and the lawyers who protect corporate planet-rapers and get rich murderers acquitted are, in fact, minions of the devil.
Is that the best joke in it? No. The devil, as always, gets all the best lines. Al relishes a great cornball performance, spouting all manner of hilarious cod-theology as operatic choruses swell in the background. Unfortunately Keanu trundles through the whole thing like a stuffed beagle on casters.

This World, Then The Fireworks

Crime drama set in 1950s America, with one of the daftest titles in the history of film.
Lighting the blue touch paper: Billy Zane (*Dead Calm*), Gina Gershon (*Showgirls*) and Sheryl Lee (*Twin Peaks*).
What happens? Zane plays Marty Lakewood, a journo chased out of town by two bent coppers he's been trying to expose. Returning home to California, he's reunited with his sister Carol (Gershon), a hooker with whom he has an incestuous relationship. He then meets and seduces a policewoman, Lois (Lee), who owns a beach-house worth a few quid. Seeing an opportunity to end his and Carol's poverty-ridden life, Marty decides to try and cash in on Lois's assets. And her property.
Sounds like there's a murder round the corner. Could be, but who's it going to be?
Any good? It's not bad. Gershon and Lee are good value throughout and Zane makes his only worthy contribution since *Dead Calm*. But it tries too hard to be a noir flick – that's moody lighting and lots of shadows to you and me.
Verdict: 5/10.
NIALL HAMPTON

I Know What You Did Last Summer

Horror flick that's been doing very nicely in the States.
Being horrified: Jennifer Love Hewitt (no one round here's heard of her, but she's also a pop singer, apparently), Sarah Michelle Gellar, Ryan Phillippe and Freddie Prinze Jr (haven't heard of them either).
And here's why: Classmates Julie, Helen, Barry and Ray celebrate the end of high school with a night out at a beauty pageant and a romp on the beach. Driving home in one of their dads' BMWs, they hit someone and suddenly have a dead body on their hands. Deciding to dispose of it rather than risk getting done for murder, they dump the stiff in the sea and go their separate ways, swearing eternal silence about it.
That's not very frightening. This is though – a year later, Helen gets a note that says only: "I know what you did last summer". And surprise surprise, the note cues a sequence of scary events. Somebody knows about the body and is out to get revenge on our four heroes, who start shitting themselves...
Worth the ticket money? For something billed as horror, this disappoints on all fronts. Acting, script, special effects, stunts and suspense are just a few things that come to mind. Add to that a soundtrack featuring 'Hush' by Kula-fucking-shaker and you know you've got a few problems.
Verdict: 5/10. About as frightening as going upstairs on a stationary bus. **NH**

"Banger? Oh, alright then" (*This World, Then The Fireworks*)

quick ones

Persons Unknown

Joe Mantegna and Kelly Lynch star in disjointed rubbish about an alcoholic security expert and former cop (Mantegna) on the run with sisters Lynch (druggie psycho) and Naomi Watts (in a wheelchair) after a (surprise surprise) bungled heist. Cartoon drug lords chase them for the stolen dough but there's little action and no tension. I slept through the last half-hour. Toss. 3/10
DEREK HARBINSON

The Borrowers

A film about small people living in skirting boards, harassed by mice and other unbelievable childish bollocks. Not a fight or sex scene to be had. But it's got John Goodman in it. 4/10 **PT**

Home Alone 3

Macaulay Culkin home alone at his age. Big deal. What's he doing? Wanking over porn films? Smoking crack? Bearing in mind he's about 30 and he's divorced his parents, it's hardly surprising he's at home alone is it? What's that? Oh, he's not actually in this one... this time round, eight-year-old Alex D Linz (*Cable Guy*) takes the leading role. This claims to be a comedy, with 'slapstick' violence. Seen one, seen 'em all. Toilet. 4/10. **NH**

"Don't call me Lazenby!" (*Tomorrow Never Dies*)

Tomorrow Never Dies

No one here's actually seen the film yet but that doesn't matter. We know it will be good, you know it will be good. It's got Pierce Brosnan, Teri Hatcher and Jonathan Pryce in it and it's rammed with expensive stunts, a soundtrack including the Propellerheads and Moby, cool gadgets and an implausible plot about an international media baddie. Plus stealth boats, bike chases, a high-altitude parachute jump, cars, guns, women, bad guys, good guys, M, world threat and Martini. 007/10 **PT**

Stan regretted carrying a kidney donor card

Laurel laughs, Hardy ha

It's another fine video marathon they've gotten us into...

Ulverston in Cumbria could be any other town, really. There's a Woolies, an Oxfam shop and a bookies. But then it all gets a bit odd. For some reason there's a lighthouse, even though the town is almost five miles from any coastline. There's also a bypass that goes right through the centre of town. A cafe in the centre closes for lunch and, until recently, the place had the most pubs per person in England. It's pretty apt, then, that on 16 June 1890 Arthur Stanley Jefferson, better known as Stan Laurel, was born in Argyll Street in Ulverston. Possibly Britain's finest ever comic genius and the greatest berk who ever lived. Along with his rotund partner Oliver Hardy, the pair went on to become one of the most successful comedy teams in cinema history, with more than 200 short and feature films to their name.

Appropriately, Ulverston has the world's only museum dedicated to Laurel and Hardy. Started up in the early '70s by Bill Cubin, it's currently run by his daughter Marion and her son, Mark. A hotchpotch of memorabilia, cuttings, letters and models line the walls of the small museum, plus an authentic small cinema shows Laurel and Hardy films all day. If you're obsessed with Laurel and Hardy, then there's no better place in the world.

With that in mind, and as it's currently 75 years since Stan and Ollie made their first film together, myself and Tim Southwell (a good Stan Laurel impressionist) went on a pilgrimage to Ulverston to visit Stan's house. We also took on an all-nighter in the museum watching Laurel and Hardy films until we fell into a sort of mild madness.

Big Business (1929)

A silent one but still good. Stan and Ollie are selling Christmas trees door to door. The weather is, quite obviously, very sunny. Basically, no one's very interested and when they get to James Finlayson's house, it starts to get violent. Eventually, after an argument, they destroy his home and he wrecks their car.

Best line: Ollie to some poor lady who quite obviously doesn't want to buy a Christmas tree:

"Wouldn't your husband like to buy one?" he asks. She replies shyly that she's not married.

Stan: "If you had a husband, would he buy one?"

Laughing Gravy (1931)

It's snowing. Everyone's asleep until Stan gets hiccups, which wakes up their dog (called Laughing Gravy), who starts yapping. This wakes up the landlord (Charlie Hall) who chucks the dog out in the snow. The pair then try to get the dog back, which involves the destruction of a chimney and fireplace.

Best bit: Ollie lying in a heap by the fireplace staring at the camera as bricks slowly fall on him.

Our Wife (1931)

Ollie plans to elope with a large woman called Dulcy. Stan hires them a very small car to escape in, which takes them about five minutes to fit inside. They find a priest (cross-eyed) to do the deed, and Ollie ends up married to Stan.

Best line: Stan at the priest's house talking to his daughter: "We want to get married," says Stan.

"Not we," says Ollie, "us," pointing to Dulcy and himself.

"Not we," repeats Stan to the woman, "us." The woman punches Stan on the nose.

Them Thar Hills (1934)

Ollie has gout and is advised by his doctor to go to the country to relax. Stan has the idea of hiring a trailer. They arrive in the country and park by a well where, that morning, the locals had dumped some moonshine. Eventually, the pair of

Will the real Stan and Ollie stand up, please?

PHOTOS: RONALD GRANT ARCHIVE

them become pissed as farts. Mae Busch turns up with her husband Charlie Hall who's soon pissed as well. It ends with Stan and Ollie covering the husband in feathers and sticking a plunger on his head while he sets fire to Ollie's arse.
Best line: When Ollie offers to cook some beans and coffee for their dinner, Stan smiles and says, "You sure know how to plan a meal."

Tit For Tat (1935)
Stan and Ollie open up an electrical store next door to Charlie Hall and Mae Busch's grocery store. Almost immediately, they start fighting again. Hall's shop ends up wrecked and Stan and Ollie's place has everything nicked from it.
Best bit: Ollie innocently leaves a bedroom with Mae Busch and remarks in front of her husband that, "I've never been in a position like that before."

Towed In A Hole (1932)
The pair of them sell fish until Stan comes up with the plan of cutting out the middleman and catching the fish themselves. Eventually they buy a boat which needs some work done to it. Stan inevitably destroys everything he touches. He knocks Ollie into some paint, pushes him in some water and falls on him through the boat clutching an anchor.
Best bit: Stan plays noughts and crosses with himself and turns away when he does the second move.

County Hospital (1932)
Ollie is in hospital with a broken leg. Stan turns up with some hard-boiled eggs and nuts for him. Stan uses the counterweight keeping Ollie's leg in place as a nutcracker and somehow sends the doctor out of the window and Ollie onto the ceiling.
Best bit: Ollie: "Why didn't you buy me some candy?" Stan: "You didn't pay me for the last lot I bought you."

Men O'War (1929)
Stan and Ollie are sailors on shore leave. They meet two girls in the park and invite them for a soda. They go boating with them and end up fighting with everybody else on the lake. It ends with everyone on their boat fighting as it slowly sinks.
Best bit: Stan and Ollie are forced to share a soda. Ollie lets Stan have his half first, and he drinks all of it.
Ollie: "Do you know what you've done?" Stan (crying): "Well, my half was on the bottom."

The Music Box (1932)
Their most famous film. The pair are hired to deliver a piano to a house at the top of a steep hill. This entails climbing a huge staircase and falling down it about four times. Eventually they get it in the house, only to find the bloke doesn't want it and smashes it up.
Best line: Stan goes downstairs to see a policeman, who's been shouting at them. When he reaches him, the policeman tells him he wants "that other monkey", so Stan shouts up to Ollie, "He don't want me, he wants the other monkey."

Stan Laurel (left) wasn't responsible for making Clint Eastwood (right) see the light of day, despite persistent rumors they were father and son.
RUMOR: Clint Eastwood is actually the son of comedian Stan Laurel.
NOT TRUE, though coincidence and secrecy make this story less far-fetched than it might seem.
Eastwood's biographical listing in Who's Who in America makes no mention of his parents (a highly unusual omission) and gives his birthdate as May 31, without specifying the year. Elsewhere, however, he has revealed that he was born in San Francisco in 1930, and that his father's name was also Clinton.
In 1930, Stan Laurel was at the pinnacle of his film career.
On May 7 — the same month that Eastwood was born — his wife gave birth to a son in Hollywood. The child lived only nine days. Laurel, who could not bear to see him, insisted on a cremation.
Somehow, the infant's death without a funeral and Eastwood's reluctance to expose his family to publicity have combined to make one of our more curious rumors.

THE LOAFER

Thanks to Mark and Marion at the Laurel & Hardy Museum. Hope we didn't leave too much of a mess. Ring 01229 582292 for more Laurel and Hardy info. Videos are currently on sale through VVL.

Stan and Ollie's actor mates

James Finlayson
This man did the original "Doh!" The creator of *The Simpsons*, Matt Groening, admits that it was Finlayson who inspired Homer's outburst. Finlayson was also the king of the double-take (classic gag where someone looks at something, turns away and then looks back again startled). A great bloke.

Charlie Hall
The ultimate fall guy and Laurel and Hardy's nemesis. He would mostly end up completely humiliated, soaked, filthy or dead.

Mae Busch
The regular wife/tart/bitch/drunk in many of their short films. She had an amazing piercing voice which would often scare the shit out of both Stan and Ollie.

Arthur Housman
Probably the finest drunk actor ever. He often wore an ice pack on his head. Actors who portrayed drunks were often teetotallers, but Housman actually had a drink problem.

"Wun, waaabbit!" (Kilmer and De Niro in *Heat*)

Action man

Former SAS bloke Andy McNab shooting stars

Young blokes want to be in the SAS for a number of reasons: to dress like the Milk Tray Man or Zorro; to shoot foreigners; or to enjoy the extra razzmatazz that a life of piling out of helicopters and exploding into General Gadaffi's TV room might provide. For these reasons, and probably some other inconsequential ones, like wanting to serve your country, do right by the world, end communism and bring peace in our time, blah, blah, blah, the SAS is almost as popular as staring at girls. This popularity means we'll buy almost anything even remotely associated with the regiment. Everything from scud key rings to latex Iraqi ears.

The instigator of much of the current mania surrounding the 22 SAS Regiment is Andy McNab, the man who commanded the extraordinary Bravo Two Zero mission during the Gulf War. The operation, to sever Iraqi communication lines, has gone down in regimental history as one of its most incredible, despite it leading to the deaths of three patrol members and the torture of McNab himself at the hands of the Iraqi Gestapo. His book of the operation, *Bravo Two Zero*, sold an incredible 1.5 million copies.

Surprisingly, Andy McNab looks more like a plasterer than the kind of 'I shit bullets' nut-job you'd expect to find in the SAS. The only thing that might set him apart from you or me is his obvious fitness. These days, he works as a private security consultant and advises the movies, and is currently working on the screen dramatisation of his book (starring Sean Bean as McNab), having coordinated the robberies in Michael Mann's *Heat*.

How did he get involved?

"De Niro read my book, and suggested to Michael Mann that I update the script. Basically, I made sure the mechanics of the robberies were right. For example, the explosives had to be cut the right way so the guards inside the van weren't killed. We also made the gunfights much more realistic. I got a fax from a rifle association saying that the running battle outside the bank was the best-filmed shoot-out they'd ever seen.

He looks more like a plasterer than a 'shit bullets' nut job

"The SWAT team on the film and all the police were real, apart from the stunt men that go down. There was a full-time captain from LAPD there and he said that there was no way a policeman with two kids and a mortgage would go up against determined blokes with automatic weapons. The police are at a further disadvantage because they have to shoot to avoid civilians, but the other side don't give a fuck."

After the movie came out, a bunch of real robbers staged an identical robbery in LA. Apparently, they even delayed the robbery for three days because they wanted the special swagbags that McNab had got for Kilmer and De Niro to use in *Heat*.

"They had seven or eight officers shot in that robbery. The calibre of the weapons the police were using weren't strong enough to penetrate the robbers' body armour. The SWAT teams had to buy hunting rifles to knock the blokes down. Very scary."

So, with all your movie experience, could you have done better than Lewis Collins in *Who Dares Wins?*

"Hahahah. No, no chance. Hahahaha."

PHIL ROBINSON

The Ultimate Warrior *is out on BMG Video November, priced £12.99.*

WHO'S THE MAN: You've seen the face, now what's his bloody name?

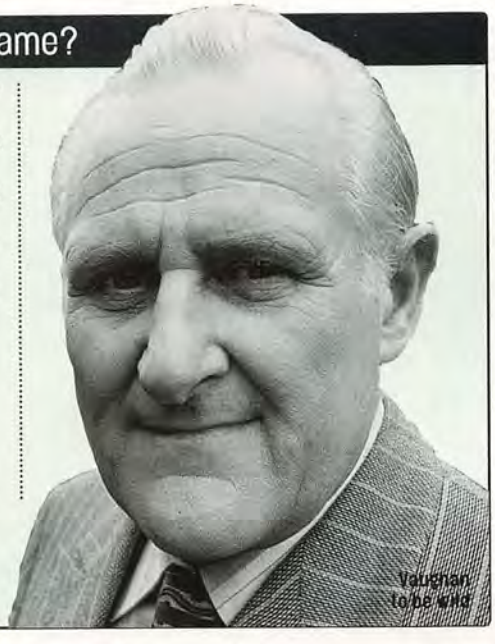
Peter Vaughan

Peter Vaughan, a 6ft 4in, 14st, Shrewsbury-born brute, has been a seething, demon-eyed presence for more years than it may be advisable to remind him. He was the rabble-rousing, heavy-duty Cornish yokel in *Straw Dogs* back in 1971, and didn't seem to have changed much when he weighed in at the bar in the recent London gang saga, *Face*. There, well into his 70s, he still looked like he'd slit your throat as soon as spit in your pint.

Vaughan made his stage debut in pre-war Wolverhampton before an "absolutely terrifying" stint sticking it to Adolf's mob. Terrifying for the Hun, that is. As a struggling thesp, he roomed with Donald Pleasance, and presumably they practised scaring the shit out of each other. Although he claims to be really as quiet as a mouse, first wife Billie Whitelaw's autobiography painted him as penny-pinching and aggressive, and his son-in-law, Gregor 'Rab C Nesbitt' Fisher, lovingly calls him "a cantankerous old git". These days "Vaughany" is most likely to fly into a rage if he's recognized as Grouty, the prison tobacco-baron he played in *Porridge*. "I've done plenty of work since then," he protests. Indeed. De Niro (in *Brazil*), Sinatra (*The Naked Runner*), Winona Ryder (*The Crucible*), and Ken Russell (*Valentino*) are just a few of those who've faced the man-mountain and lived to tell the tale.

Happiest out walking his two big bastard German shepherds, Vaughan recently received rave notices for his portrayal of Felix, the dad humbled by Alzheimer's in *Our Friends In The North* – a role close to his heart. "At the bottom of my pocket, there's a ticket back to the North Country," he says. Let that be a warning to anyone residing north of Watford.

GAVIN MARTIN



Vaughan, to be exact

REVIEWS

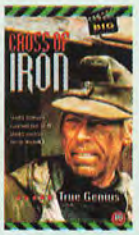
Video page Christmas gift spesh. Fantastic gift ideas for all the family...

GRANDAD:
The All Nude Page Three Calendar Boulevard, £14.99
Give Grandad a stork-on for Christmas. What gift could be kinder than a video compilation of cheeky and accommodating Page Three birds sticking their highly polished bums in the air? This is a calendar in the loosest possible sense, in that it's not actually a calendar. Any attempt on your part to schedule an important engagement in January and you'll be greeted with footage of the pendulous Linsey Dawn McKenzie, half-heartedly masturbating.

MUM:
Moonraker, MGM/UA, £9.99
What would Yuletide be without the gift of Roger Moore? Think of the pleasure Mum will get from reliving the thrills and spills of some vintage Bond: sword fights; a punch-up on a cable car with Jaws; spaceships dicing with death in laser dogfights. All this mayhem and action with the added wildcard of Moore's entertaining sexuality. Just imagine the ecstasy spreading over her face as she howls like a mad dog at the thought of climbing on big Roger and experiencing his man-pleasure at first-hand.

DAD:
Hardcore, Siren, £12.99
Bored-looking *Sweeney* birds and Legs & Co dollies in tiny bikini bottoms sipping warm Pomagne while swarthy Arab gents with purple velvet bow ties fiddle with their wobbly bits. If this wasn't a quite famous sex flick starring nookie legend Fiona Richmond, I'd swear it was undiscovered documentary evidence of how the privileged elite in the '70s spent their waking hours rutting each other's bums like promiscuous monkeys. Perfect for Dad, who probably likes his sex symbols sounding like Trisha Yates and sporting the expression a halibut might pull when questioning a parking fine.

SOMETHING FOR THE KIDS:
Cross of Iron, Warner Home Video, £5.99
What could be better for the kids this Christmas than watching Peckinpah's visual feast about a bunch of shell-shocked German squaddies tearing each other apart while being massacred by Russian soldiers on the Eastern Front? Children are never too young to learn about the madness of war, or relive this video through repetitive and horrible nightmares.



LESBIAN OLDER SISTER:
Where The Boys Aren't 4, Boulevard, £12.99
This is, without doubt, the honest truth about lesbians. Bang-to-rights footage of what these wimmin get up to when left to their own sordid devices. Apparently shot on location at an all-girl boarding school, this is the most damning evidence yet that lesbians are having sordid, three-way sex by swimming pools, feeding each other cake, and meeting in toilets to urinate on and stimulate each other. Fantastic.

PHIL ROBINSON

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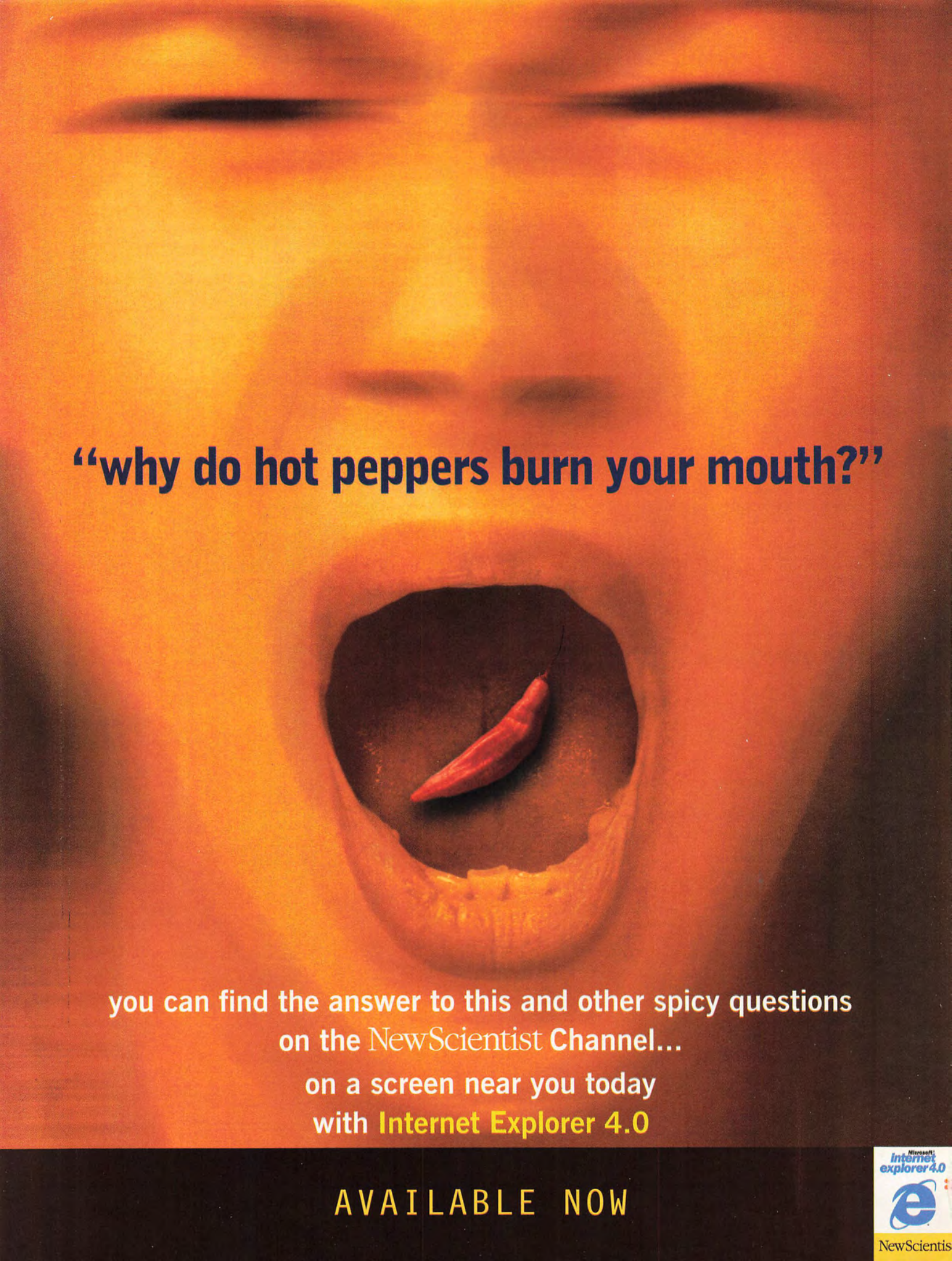
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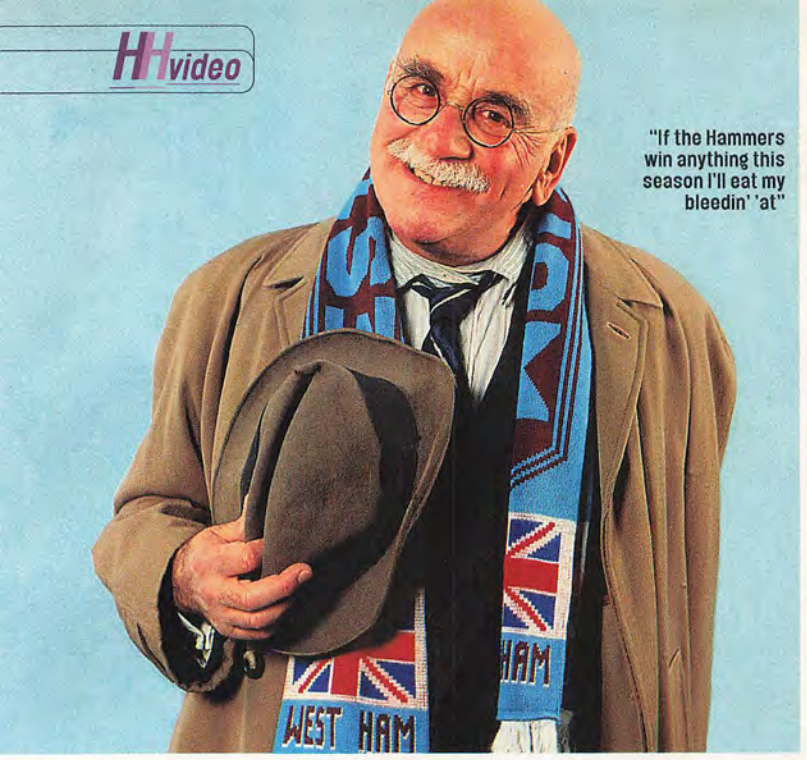

"If the Hammers win anything this season I'll eat my bleedin' 'at"

Better 'Alf

Warren Mitchell, the nice guy inside Mr Garnett

Sounds a bit scary. The man with more claret and blue than a porn film in a French vineyard; the foul-mouthed racist; the man with the silly moo complex. Would you want an audience with him? Of course you would. For 30 years now, Warren Mitchell has blazed a path through irony, niceties and general British reserve.

"I get asked about the racism in every interview and I can give lots of answers. One of the worst things about today's culture is that you are stopped from saying things, specific words, for any reason, no matter what you are using them for. Alf Garnett has always been a racist but if people can't see the obvious, that the joke is on him, then they, well..."

Of course, Warren himself has met with similar problems – after all, he is Jewish.

He blazed a path through irony and British reserve

"I was in the RAF with Richard Burton. We were lined up to meet some officer, who asked Burton what he wanted to do with his life. When he said, 'Be an actor,' he was asked what he'd done in theatre. His reply was 'not much' because they are 'all owned by the Jews'. He apologised to me later, of course.

"Once, I had long hair and it was summer, and I go very dark in the sun. I was out driving and I must have cut someone up – this bloke jumps out of his car screaming, 'You fucking wog, get back to your own fucking country etc, etc,' I thought, 'That's a good one.' I didn't hang around to point out his mistake."

Then, of course, there is football. Forever identified with West Ham, the real Mr Mitchell is in fact a die-hard Spurs fan, although he's been tested in recent times.

"For a few seasons I did a stand-up routine in the Spurs restaurant before the games. In return I got two tickets and two meals. When they decided this was too much, I pointed out to them exactly what I earn from an appearance and how I thought they were getting a bargain. I got this really smart-arsed, sarcastic letter back from some executive. Next game I was in the stand with an ordinary ticket when a bloke from the restaurant says, 'We've got no one to do the stand-up spot.' In the end, I said, 'OK, just this one last time.' I did it for free. At the end, I went to pick up a team sheet and two big buggers came up to me and said, 'Sorry Mr Mitchell, but you are barred from the directors' lounge' and escorted me out. I nearly tore up my tickets and walked out for good. Bloody Tottenham. The day we get Gazza and a rejuvenated Mike England back, then they can treat me like that."

ADAM PORTER

The video, An Audience With Alf Garnett, *is out now, priced £12.99.*

IS YOUR JOYSTICK FLOPPY?

THE MEGAGRIP VIII IS NOW AVAILABLE AT TANDY.

?

Tandy

YOU'VE GOT QUESTIONS. WE'VE GOT ANSWERS.

the pain, the glory, the conkers

loaded pickled its nuts and baked them in an oven in readiness for The World Conker Championships

The shampoo had promised tangle-free hair

"Someone once had a plan for strengthening his conker. He passed it through a pig." What sort of mind is willing to wade through swine shit to retrieve a conker he's convinced the aforementioned beast to eat in the first place? Dedicated individuals at the 33rd World Conker Championships in Ashton, Northamptonshire, it would appear.

The common conker, or horse chestnut, or the *Aesculus hippocastanum*, reminds us of desperately baking, polishing, varnishing or soaking in vinegar these humble objects in order to achieve instant cred in the school playground. Not just memories, though, for these conker contenders. Folk raised in strange country ways; hats made from conkers, staffs of birch, clogs, that sort of thing. And they've never forgotten their nuts, as it were. What is immediately evident is that every man, woman, child and dog is nursing an alcoholic drink at 10.30 on a freezing Sunday morning in October. The **loaded** visitors to this timewarped outpost of English eccentricity now know how Edward Woodward felt in *The Wicker Man*, stumbling upon a strange Scottish cult shrouded in custom and coded language.

A man looking not unlike Godfrey from *Dad's Army* slurs that the contest will start at 10.30am Ashton local time, and we're not the first press to arrive, don't you know. There are crews from Germany, Australia, France and Japan. He says a local conker shortage this year nearly jeopardized the event. A disaster of national proportions narrowly avoided then.

We nod in silent respect, but since Godfrey is dressed head to toe in a conker outfit and the time is actually 10.57 GMT, we take our leave of this driven man, reasoning that he is perhaps not the full ticket.

A mixture of townies, tourists and the downright perplexed mix with myth-riddled dipsomaniac locals around this usually peaceful village green. Raymond, an Essex conker

conkers through history

History records that the noble art of the conker bout originated in France. The Norman invasion of 1066 had them playing it with snail's shells. The fact that the French for one of these is 'conch' is irrelevant, since we started using conkers instead. Since then, little has changed. One conker is struck against the other until one is shattered. That's about it. A petition is planned to make conkers an Olympic event, such is the dedication of all those involved. And even if it was a French idea, we've won the championships 31 times out of 32, so by proxy it's our sport.

Paul McKenna had a right laugh with this lot

She stoops to conker

One tug of the chain and he was ready to leave his throne

"I've been preparing for this for weeks," says blue number 21. "Down the pub, in my living room, everywhere." And what's the secret of your technique? "I can't tell you that!" he exclaims, with a look of total disbelief.

Everyone's tight-lipped about tactics. The conker mantra heralds the start of the competition. Its first line is, "You don't have to be bonkers, to play with your conkers..." and continues in the same vein, creating a very clear picture of the sort of person involved in this event.

The teams competing include the bereted French, face-painted South Africans, helmeted Germans, and scores of the simply pissed. They all start cheering. If they all began dancing naked around the green sacrificing virgins left, right and centre, no one would bat an eyelid.

The first round passes quickly. Splintered conkers put eyes at risk. The process becomes a blur of swinging arms, dashed hopes, bruised forearms and increased cheering. The second round follows, and the third is lost somewhere in the midst of vast quantities of alcohol and nationalist pride.

At 12.53pm the scene turns ugly. Stewards surround the irate Essex Viking, Raymond. It appears he's got the same name as another player, and this unprecedented turn of events throws everyone into an state of tension. A hushed delegation of stewards, dressed in

"You've got to watch out, you can get hurt. Miss your nut and you can hit a bollock"

fanatic, stumbles over, dressed solely in a Norse helmet, cape and cloak made from... yes, conkers! He proceeds to instruct a pair of newcomers in the ways of the *Aesculus hippocastanum*. "We're very passionate about it," he splutters, "but you've got to watch out, you can get hurt. Miss your nut and you can hit a bollock. Which is why I wear this..." he adds, lifting his leather kilt to reveal a codpiece resplendent in the little brown buggers. Another one gone the way of the Godfrey.

Platforms have been erected within a players' arena, and a collecting area holds the eager selections from 300 would-be nut-bashers, forming the first round of this monumental event. We are surrounded by stone-faced competitors already suffering from pre-bout nerves.

regulation conker jackets and shorts, shuffle to one side. The crowd stands its ground, readying for conker Armageddon. You could slice the air and serve it with a mug of real ale. After minutes of anticipation, it's all over. Raymond is allowed to continue his march into history, and promptly loses the next round. He is inconsolable, but all's fair in nuts and war.

There's a brief pause as the stages are repositioned for the semi-finals. Asking a steward at this point if he has any tips for cheating is like remarking that he has a passion for sodomising goats: "It's just not possible – the rules are too strict, we're too good at our job! All the conkers are carefully picked and threaded in advance and kept under watch until the last minute."

The French have now got through to the semi-finals. Faces are stern. "He favours the downward swipe with a build-up in angle towards the strike," observes Godfrey, musing on whether he's a threat to England's crown. "He could be..." he trails off, with the thousand-yard stare of someone turned terminally odd.

The arena is honed down until one stage remains. The crowd quietens. An old bugger who has drunk a bottle of Johnny Walker Black Label collapses with the tension. The Frenchman has his first strike. Then the second and the third. He favours the sideways swipe technique, cunning Johnny foreigner that he is. His opponent, visibly shaken, retains his cool. He breathes deep and arcs his weapon outwards and down. Time slows and the conkers meet, shattering the French one into a hail of splintered pieces. The crowd goes mental. The conker crown remains on English soil. Paul Vjestica, a drummer in a local band called Porky Pig, is now the 33rd World Conker Champion. This is what happens when there aren't enough multiplex cinemas being built.

Until next year: "We came, we saw, we conkered." Geddit?

PIERS TOWNLEY

To enter next year's competition, send an SAE to John Hadman, 22 New Road, Oundle, Peterborough.

Sports Listings

Greyhound Racing, Christmas Cracker Stakes Final, Milton Keynes, 26 Dec, tel: 01908 670150

Skinny dogs can't half shift. Especially when fooled that their next square meal is running just ahead of them. If they catch it and find out it's a stuffed toy, the shit will hit the fan.

Equestrianism, Olympia International Championships, Olympia, London, 18-22 Dec, tel: 0171 373 3113

Obscure games for horses to play, such as jumping over poles and walking sideways will take place. The whys and wherefores of this sort of activity will be a closely guarded secret, upheld by country types and 14-year-old girls.

Bowls, Indoor League Open Singles, first rounds, Islwyn, Wales, 28 Dec, tel: 01443 733102

Hard drugs, fast women and shooters will not be present at this event. Lots of old people stubbornly refusing to die will potter around drinking tea and rolling large globes along immaculate lawns. Indoors.

Husky Racing, Bedgebury Forest, Kent, 3-4 Jan, tel: 01580 211044

Better fed dogs will run through woods in this heavyweight version of dog- related sports, with competitors raised on a diet of prime steak and children and the promise of as many bitches at the end as they can handle.

Skiing, Alpine, World Cup Men's Giant Slalom, Alta Badia, Italy, 20-21 Dec

Spectacular downhill breaking of limbs framed by breathtaking scenery from the land of pasta. Seasonal snowbound settings herald Yuletide festivities, and will pass the time on the box until the Bond movie starts.

Thatcher's England

Wimbledon's young left-back, Ben Thatcher

He's acknowledged in the game as one of the country's brightest young prospects, yet he's enjoyed none of the acclaim heaped on David Beckham and Michael Owen. And Ben Thatcher wouldn't have it any other way.

"When I speak to players up north they tell me they can't go anywhere without getting bothered," says the 21-year-old Wimbledon defender. "But in London so much is going on, you just get bypassed really, and it suits me that way."

Despite being born in Swindon, Thatcher's a London boy at heart. Starting his career at Millwall, he was one of a group of young stars that made their names and became crowd favourites at The Den. But so low was his profile outside of SE16, he was able to help out on his landlord's flower stall on his days off. And there's not many people associated with Millwall who would be caught dead doing that.

Eventually, the club's investment in a plush new stadium forced them to cash in on their youthful prospects. Despite rumoured interest from Man United and Liverpool, Thatcher chose Wimbledon.

"I wanted to stay in London, so when I found out that Wimbledon were interested I went and spoke to Sam Hammam and Joe Kinnear and it was sorted out within two days," he says. But then an ankle injury intervened.

"I started the season playing well at Premiership level, captaining the England Under-21s, then I got injured and had to prove myself all over again."

It sidelined him for nearly a year. He had to sit out one of The Crazy Gang's most exciting seasons that saw the club reach two semi-finals.

Ultimately, his ambition is to play for the full England side. Pundits have always backed him to make it, pointing to the lack of left-backs in the squad. Thatcher's not so sure.

"People say there aren't many left-sided players about, but look at Stuart Pearce, Phil Neville, Graeme Le Saux, Andy Hinchcliffe and Alan Wright. There's a few there for starters. Psycho [*Pearce*] is my hero and it's great for me when I get compared to him, though I've a long way to go yet."

It's never easy meeting someone younger than you who has more money than you. So when he picked

"In another job I wouldn't have my own house at 21"

me up from the station in his flash new black Mercedes, two thoughts crossed my mind. Firstly, I hope we're not driving through any tunnels. Secondly, does this kid know how lucky he is?

"Life as a Premiership footballer is nice," he smiles. "It's a well paid job and people from the outside point out that we work few hours for big money, but they don't see the hard work that goes into getting that first professional contract. I see my mates going out for a beer, enjoying themselves and I know I can't do that at certain times of the week."

"The ball's glued to his feet"

Sensing I'm not falling over with sympathy, he swiftly qualifies himself. "OK, it's a real privilege and it's nice to do something you enjoy, representing the team on a Saturday, having the crack with the boys in training. At 21, I've got my own house and a car. In another job I wouldn't have that."

He may be enjoying his relative anonymity at the moment but, if the pundits are to be believed, Ben Thatcher will be a household name before long. His girlfriend is also on the brink of fame, as part of a brand new girl band to be launched onto the music scene.

Is he ready for the public attention of being one half of the next Beckham and Posh Spice? If a place in the full England squad is the pay-off, he'll get over it.

CHAS NEWKEY-BURDEN

PHOTOS: DEREK RIDGERS/ALLSPORT

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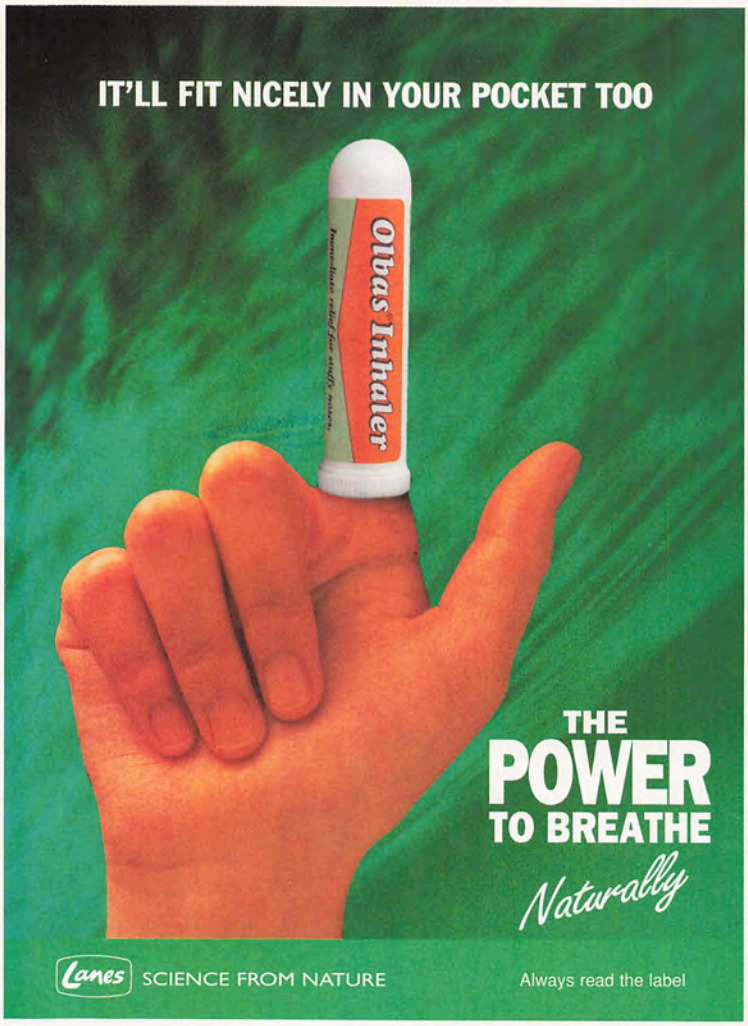
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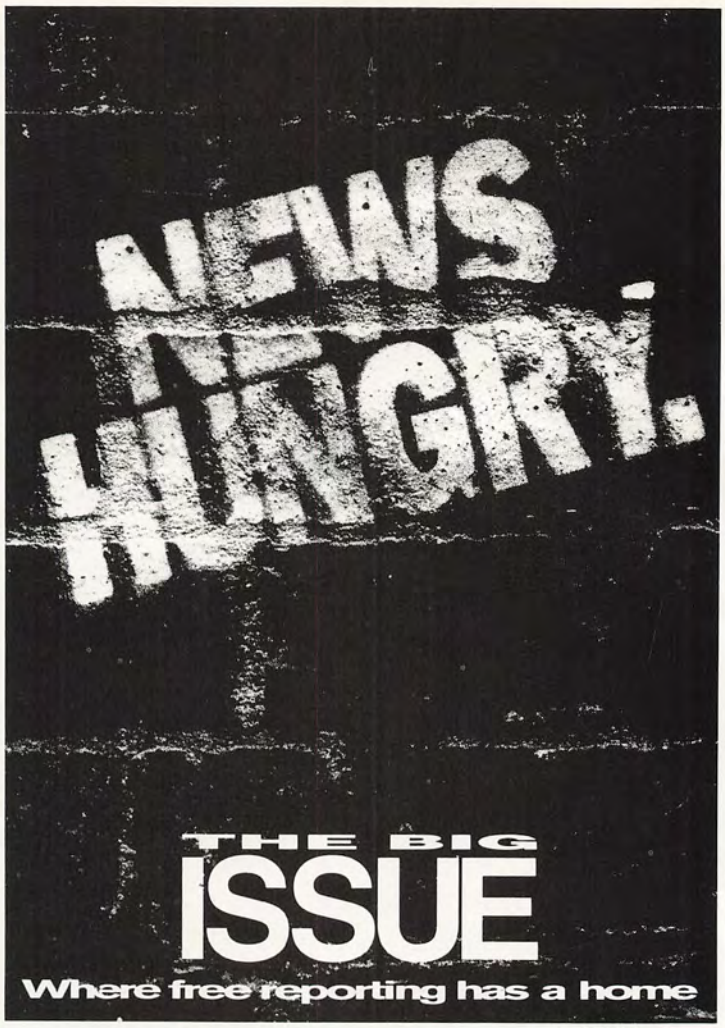
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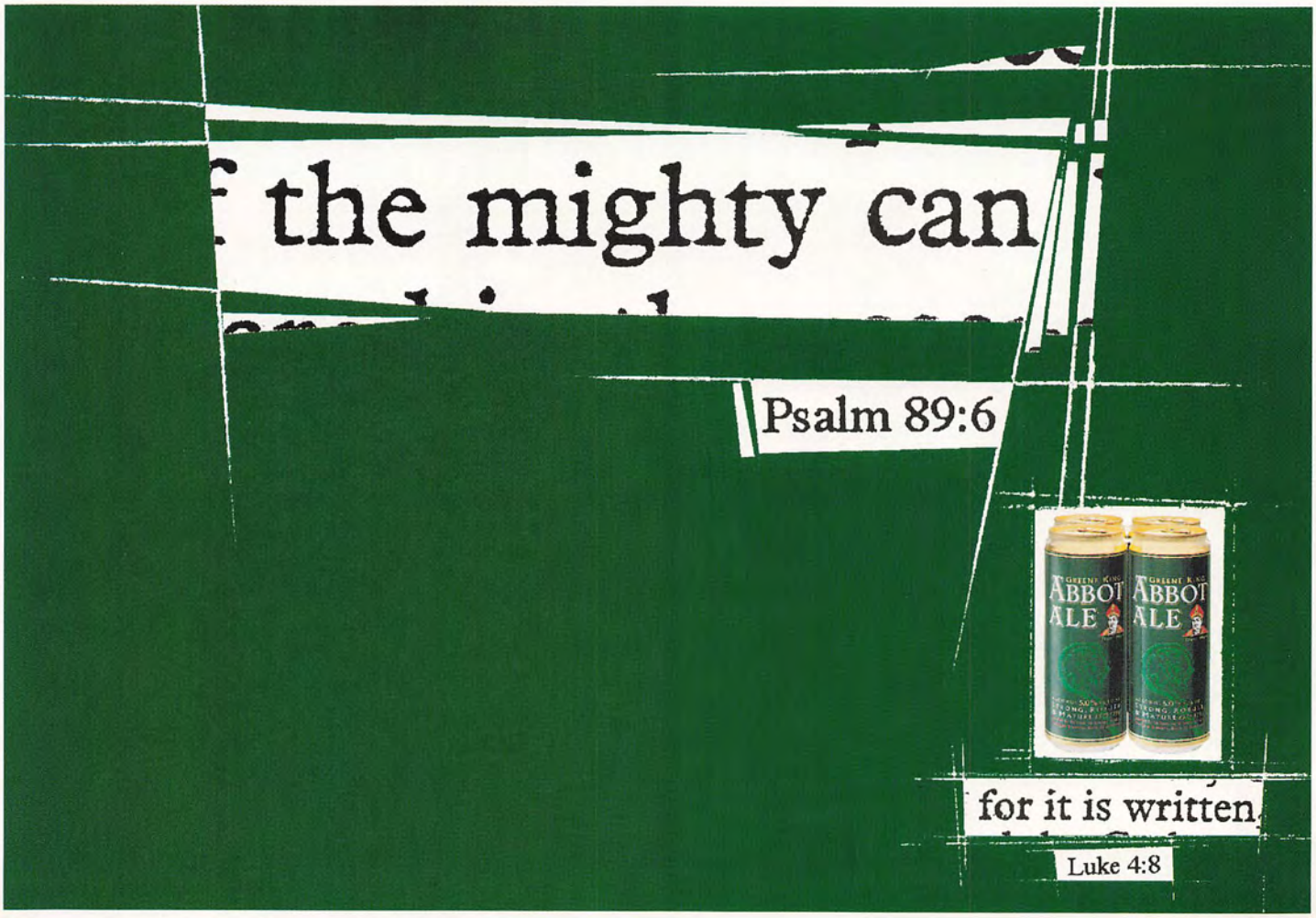
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Psalm 89:6
ABBOT ALE
ABBOT ALE
for it is written
Luke 4:8

The Great GREASY SPOON RUN

Where's the best cafe in Britain?

What's the best meal you've ever had? Chances are it was cheap. Chances are you bought it in one of those little cafes in the high street run by a bloke called George who's blown his nose on the toast. You can't beat a good British Working Blokes' Cafe – eggs, bacon, sausage, chips and a big mug of tea with a pubic hair on the lip (oh, hang on, not that last bit)... Luverly. But where do you go to get the best? YOU TELL US!

WRITE IN and NOMINATE YOUR FAVOURITE CAFE.

We don't care where it is, we'll go anywhere. Just send us a postcard with its full name and address on the back and tell us why you like it. You might even win a prize. Remember to include your own name and address so we can come and be sick on your carpet if it's crap. Remember – we only want the best. We're looking for value for money, big portions, cooked to order and NO re-heats. A proper, friendly fry-up. Send your nominations immediately to The Great Greasy Spoon Run, loaded, King's Reach Tower, Stamford St, London, SE1 9LS. Hurry up, we're starving.

Mickey's Disneymatter

Disneyland Paris: enough to make you goofy

Nothing is what it seems. Everything at the resort formerly known as Eurodisney is a cypher, a code for something else. At worst it is a facade, like our hotel – a vast exterior hiding the mundane facts. Or a resentful French student dressing up as Goofy for a paperboy's wages. A fucking joke, in other words, and much like life in that respect.

The wonderful world of Disney. How happy we were, the six of us speeding beneath the Channel on a date with plastic castle destiny. The promise of free drink, food and shelter luring us to France on Halloween like an angler's maggot seducing a fat old carp.

"Disney," announces Reece, as the Eurostar emerged into the light, "have their own police force. They're all dressed as cartoon characters. If they catch you messing about or out of it, they lead you off laughing so as not to disturb the punters. Then they put you in a cartoon cell with a yellow brick floor." If only it were true. The real fact is that there's no one to save you here but yourself. A lesson we learned the hard way, surrounded by line-dancing French kids with pumpkins on their heads.

Disneyland Paris, you'd be forgiven for thinking, is a family affair. And sure enough, the emphasis is on wallet-busting hi-jinks for children, and gnarling, introspective boredom for adolescents forced into that final, ill-judged overseas holiday with mum and dad. Yet, in their wisdom, Disney have decided to include a zone of alcoholic decadence and fast food in its plans. 'Disney Village' they call it. A place so crazy and debauched that the Sports Bar has a happy hour. Once a week. On a Thursday. As if that ain't enough, it also boasts Billy Bob's Country & Western Saloon, somewhere called Rock'n'Roll America, and, wait for it (in a big queue), a nightclub.

"Treats for the little ones," yells the Disney Halloween brochure, "and some special scares for the big ones!" As a special treat, the Frontierland area has been kept open into the night for us. The first 'big scare' is the fact that several hundred other people are trying to get in as well. This is compounded by 'big scares' numbers two and three: it's fucking freezing and the hilarious 'mouse money' we've been given, supposedly our passport to a night of debauchery, is valid only for margaritas hand-mixed by Helen Kelle and served in a pizza restaurant. Such trials apart, the park itself boasts an atmosphere of unprecedented strangeness. The air is filled with disembodied roars and screams, and the streets and paths are awash with children dressed as Satan – like *The Wickerman* set in McDonald's car park. No sooner have we established that we cannot, eat, drink, stay warm or speak French, than snapper Tony, already stricken with flu, retreats to his room when someone snaps his camera in a half. He's shortly followed by the Loafer, as he has "had enough" and "it's freezing".

It's 8pm. Salvation comes in the form of rides. Thunder Mountain is a jaunty indoors and outdoors rollercoaster in the shape of a big plastic mountain. With thunder. This pales, though, next to the gravity and colon-testing switchback, 'The Temple Of Doom'. Desperate for more kicks, Reece begins to taunt the security by running full-tilt into the forbidden areas of the park, until we are escorted gently away.

So we find ourselves in the Disney Village and, ultimately, Hurricanes Nightclub, complete with full Ibizan 'amphitheatre'-style dancefloor and a DJ with a bunch of Ultra Nate records. The surviving four of us drink the night away, much like you would at home. The fact that anyone comes here in daylight, let alone with kids, is completely beyond me. If you go next week, I'm the one with the green pram sat by the fountain looking doomed.

MICHAEL HOLDEN

Of course they don't have the NHS in France

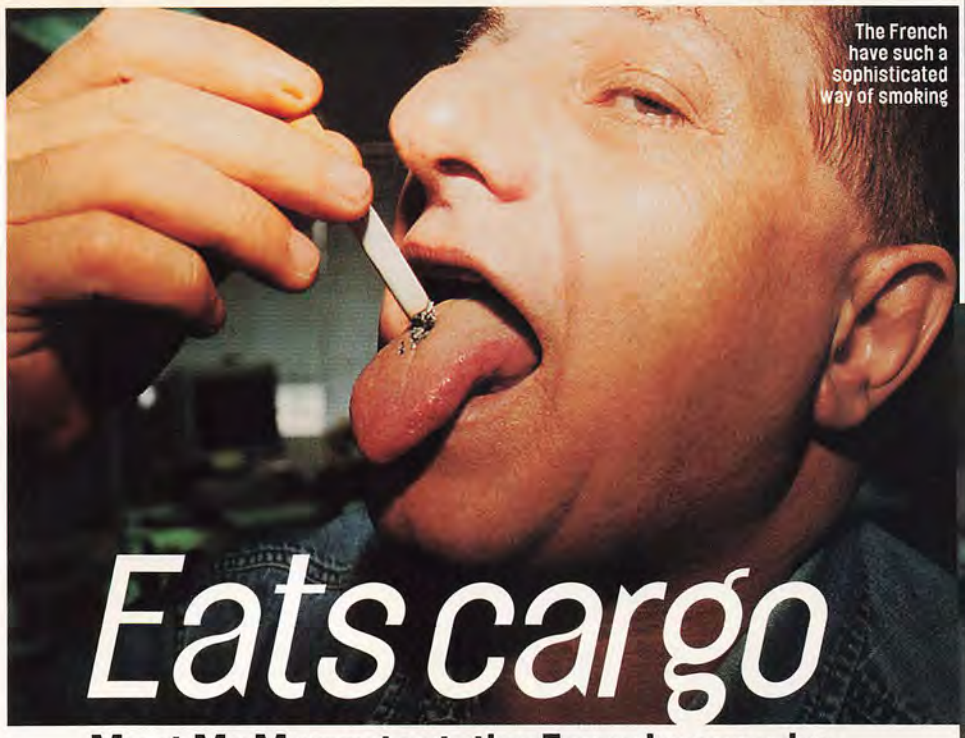
"Help, my drink's on fire

The mouse money is valid only for margaritas

"Trick or tr... just give me some more cake"

More than just a night spot

PHOTOS: JIM



The French have such a sophisticated way of smoking

Eats cargo

"Oh, Ambassador, with zees light bulbs you are really spoiling us"

Very impressive, but you should try our canteen

Meet Mr Mangetout, the Frenchman who likes to eat planes, snails and automobiles

Mr Mangetout has teeth like worn Lego bricks and I've got my fingers in his mouth. Through his thick French saliva, I'm supposed to be feeling the width of his teeth. Slippery yellow teeth that have masticated shopping trolleys, glass, car seats and trees to a tasty pulp. Having a vigorous gnash on my plump fingers and chewing on my mashed bones wouldn't even make his nose twitch.

"Mr Mangetout has been at the London motor show eating the bonnet of a new Daewoo," says his translator, jovially. I seize this moment to whip my tender fingers out of his leathery mouth.

At just nine years old, Mr Mangetout was drinking from a glass of water when it shattered in his mouth. Instead of spitting it out, he decided to keep on chewing. A pint or two of blood down the line, he perfected a way of swallowing the stuff without doing himself any serious harm. Now he travels the world eating things most normal people either sit on or lean against.

What won't he eat?

"He's eaten 17 bikes – the tyres were the worst part," says the translator. "They weren't very tasty, and, er, rubbery. But he can't eat bananas or boiled eggs; something inside them hurts him afterwards. He also won't eat Plexiglass, like plastic windscreens. He could eat it, but it's hard to cut and it's not very impressive, and he won't eat foam."

Mr M shakes his head like a monkey refusing a biscuit and begins to gabble in French.

"He doesn't eat foam because it's poisonous and he doesn't want to commit suicide. He ate a salad with some chicken liver and he was ill for eight days. That was after he'd just come back from the beautiful city of Strasbourg where he'd eaten two large bicycles – with the tyres."

Strangely, Mr M will only eat freshly cooked food and won't touch buffets. So, really, he isn't actually Mr Mange*tout*, because he doesn't eat much at all. He wouldn't eat my poo. Not that I'd want him to.

He ate a salad and was ill for eight days

What's the biggest thing he's eaten?

"An aeroplane, two years ago. It was for a chain of shops; he went from city to city eating it."

What was the tastiest part?

"Eating the metal was the best part. It's a heavy metal and goes down very easily, so you don't need to drink a lot of water with it."

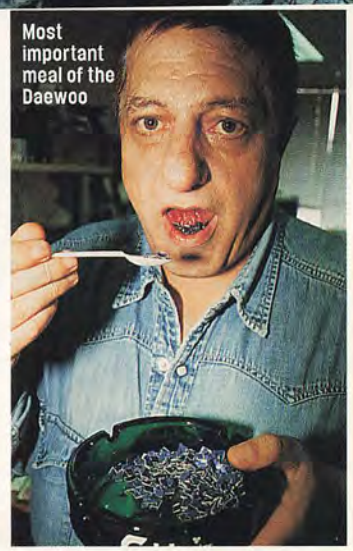
Mr M believes he owes his special constitution to his failure to separate into twins while he was in his mother's womb. As a result, he claims to have two pulses, syrupy blood, a double-lined stomach and probably, though I didn't ask, a concrete starfish.

He offers to give us a quick demonstration of his skills and begins to eat stuff that's lying around the office: some lit fags and a few bits of Daewoo bonnet. He pops a small light bulb in his mouth and bites down. It explodes with a pop and we all duck. He starts to munch on the glass, but his mouth fills with blood and he appears to be in some pain.

"He shouldn't have cut himself," says the translator. "He's eaten nearly 20 light bulbs in the last few days."

Amazing, when you consider that most people get full up after about two.

PHIL ROBINSON



Most important meal of the Daewoo

what's eating us

1 Toast swamped with Marmite. Grrr!
2 Louisiana Cajun beef sandwiches
3 A bit of Kate's scone
4 Steamed chocolate pudding with white chocolate ice cream
5 Wotsits (the people's snack)
6 Airborne micro-organisms
7 Linda McCartney's thingies
8 Brick Lane curries
9 The ravages of time
10 Stringy spinach
11 Free stuff from Kwiksave

Sweet news

Hot on the heels of the Cadbury's Fuse bar comes Nestlé's retaliatory strike, the Maverick. Both give off the impression of a sort of confectionery sausage made of choccy offal – bits that might have been left over after all the other bars were made, banged into some limb-eating piece of industrial machinery and slopped together into a big log. But then again, who doesn't love a sausage? The Maverick, with its grammatically challenging slogan, "Maverick – Big Eat", is loads of bits of biscuit, toffee, raisins and caramel lathered all over by milk chocolate. And bloody good it is too. Nice textures, great taste, loads of sugar, closer to a souped-up Toffee Crisp or Lion Bar than a Fuse, to be truthful. The wrapper, however, is truly awful. It looks like a Cubist's puke. Still, got to have an angle these days, haven't you? Excellent.

DEREK HARBINSON

COMPETITION

What better way to fend off the freezing weather this winter than with a bottle of top Scotch? Glenfarclas Malt Whisky and **loaded** are offering a bottle of Glenfarclas 10-year-old Single Malt to the first 10 readers to be picked out of some sort of hat. If you know your whiskies, this is one of the best. Failing that, via **loaded** you can get the chance to win a *gallon* of the award-winning 30-year-old Glenfarclas stuff by popping into a branch of Oddbins or other leading off-licences and buying a bottle of the 10-year-old, and there are a few runner-up prizes of Glenfarclas 30-year-old as well. Just put your details on a postcard marked 'Whisky Galore' and send it to the **loaded** address on page six.

PHOTOS: MARTYN GOODACRE

Tadpoles are getting bigger

More like size four feet, really

The kettle is out there

God exposed

In a darkroom, along with UFOs and monsters

"People love the unexplained, as has been shown by the huge popularity of *The X-Files*, which has almost single-handedly lifted the interest in the paranormal over the last few years."

So claims Lynn Picknett, co-curator of The Unexplained, an exhibition of photographs which attempts to reveal that something strange and inexplicable is prowling around the fringes of reality. A sort of Paranormal Greatest Hits, it groups together all the classic cases. Some of these are convincing, backed by hard scientific evidence and study, while other examples on display may cause many to shrug in disbelief.

For instance, is that giant black tadpole shape in shallow water near Australia's Great Barrier Reef a real sea monster, or just some discarded bin-liner which some careless daytripper has left on the beach? Is that really Bigfoot looking straight into the camera of a Washington State forest patrol officer, or a moth-eaten stuffed ape? And are those shadowy jelly mould and Frisbee shapes really the reconnaissance craft of an alien task force?

Who better to ask than Nick Pope, author of two books on the subject and a man whose work for the MOD included UFO research – the man in grey who the media have dubbed, 'The real Fox Mulder'.

"I was thrown into the subject quite by accident in 1991, just as a routine MOD posting," Nick explains. "One day I was asked whether I'd like to spend three years researching and investigating UFOs. I had no previous interest or knowledge in the subject, I came to it as a tour of duty."

Despite his initial scepticism, Pope's feelings about UFOs gradually changed when he was confronted with what he describes as being, "the sheer weight of evidence involving craft operating in British airspace with a technology that has the RAF pretty envious."

Nick attributes this relatively recent extraterrestrial interest in our planet to man's evolvement as a dangerous technological animal.

"The modern UFO phenomenon started in 1947, just after we'd started testing, and then using, atomic bombs. I wonder if we have now announced our presence to our nearest interstellar neighbours, which has put them on the alert. In purely military terms, what they are doing is akin to a protracted reconnaissance exercise."

Much of the evidence that Pope had to deal with was of the photographic kind. Spotting the real UFOs from the burning hubcaps, however, was not always easy.

"With the advent of computer programs like Adobe Photoshop, it is getting extremely difficult to ever be 100 per cent sure. Which is why photographic evidence only formed one part of the total evaluation. It was just one piece of the puzzle. Others, such as radar, were far more important."

Pope has also studied alien abductions, cattle mutilations and crop circles. Is the truth out there?

"I think if we found out for sure that we were not the only intelligent life form in the universe, it would be the most profound revelation for the human race. Psychologically, I think it would be very good for us; it might give us a sense of perspective. Perhaps if we regarded ourselves as citizens of Planet Earth and just one of many intelligent races, it would be better for everyone."

Like Nick Pope's, much of Lynn Picknett's research has been based on photographic evidence. Her principal subject is the Turin Shroud, the cloth that the body of Christ was supposed to have been wrapped up in after being taken down from the cross, which bears his image.

"Amazing though it sounds, the face of the man on the Shroud is a 500-year-old photographic self-portrait of Leonardo da Vinci," claims Lynn of her and co-author Clive Prince's findings. "But from the neck down and all of the back it's the image of some anonymous, genuinely crucified person. It was produced by using a camera obscura with a lens. Leonardo was one of the few early anatomists and he was given *carte blanche* to walk into any hospice, charnel house, or morgue. He had endless opportunities to take a body, experiment with it and crucify it.

"Until we came along with our photographic theory, the believers, the so-called Shroudies, were saying, 'You can't reproduce these characteristics, it's so amazing, so therefore it's miraculous.' It was one of their phrases, 'The image behaves like a photograph', which we homed in on. And it turned out to be a photograph, it's as simple as that."

Although Picknett's theories were denounced by the Catholic Church and dismissed by da Vinci scholars, something in the way she presents her explanation rings true.

"The best joke is that he used his innovative photographic technique to create the ultimate Christian relic. The very people who would normally have condemned him to the flaming pyre were those who would look after it and make sure that posterity had it. It's a very clever trick. No doubt he was hoping that one day people would recognise it for what it is. Well we did, didn't we?"

EDWIN POUNCEY

The Unexplained runs from 22 Nov to 19 April at the National Museum of Photography, Film & Television in Bradford.

"The Turin Shroud is a 500-year-old photographic self-portrait of da Vinci"

God's tea towel

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book of the month

Never knew The Loafer (far right) was a face in the '60s – he kept this one quiet

Mods smell

At least that's what my best mate at school told me

Empire Made: The Handy Parka Pocket Guide To All Things Mod, Terry Rawlings And Keith Badman, Complete Music, £9.99

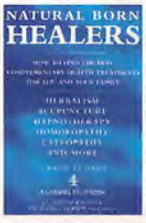
"Me scooter, you've killed me fuckin' scooter!" The GPO genocide reached a murderous conclusion in 1964 – they hated Lambrettas. Some kids just went wild crazy and dumped their two-stroke thrones of chrome over the old white cliffs. This book is a simpleton's A to Z guide to all things Mod then and a little bit now. It starts with The Action and finishes with the Yardbirds via the faces of the time plus films, scooters, TV, Weller, Woodford etc. By 1964, the Beatniks were getting old while the young heaped speed between their high-rise thighs and ran around at the weekends enjoying fresh seaside air and violence with the Village People. Sting was a Bellboy. Rod Stewart was cool. Pilchards were posh. Style was the key in this jet-set trouser press, but the inclusion of Tony Blackburn in this bible is a wrong. Random quote: "Five birds, one chick, four hits." Brighton was just a giggle, was it?

Tarzan Versus Predator, Lee Weeks & Walter Simonson, Titan Books, £7.99

Considering the Predator is super tooled-up with spikes, lasers and armour, why does he always managed to get whacked? This time, a muscle Mary in tight yellow fur pants takes on Pred' and his mates, Grant Mitchell-style, beneath the eternal sunlight of the earth's core. Random quote: "Jomo knows, her thrall was beyond resisting." A tough junglist novel.

Lonely Teardrops: The Jackie Wilson Story, Tony Douglas, Sanctuary, £14.99

This book reckons Jackie's ultimate boss was the Mob. So who earns the cash from this informed tale of a great singer's ability to sing 'Higher And Higher', imbibe pills, booze and cocaine, get shot by a demented fan, suffer a crippling heart attack and not move for nine years before he finally croaked? Random quote: "Launa once asked how many bodies I'd put in the river this week." Rave on.



Natural Born Healers, Elisabeth Wilson & Dr George Lewith, Collins & Brown, £6.99

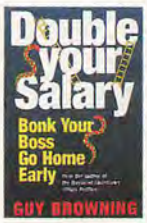
An idiot's guide to naturally healing niggly things like stress and bowel disease. This isn't one for the lentil-wearing, cardboard-eating warriors of eco-fame. Random quote: "Geoff is a healer." So was Jesus.

The Sayings of Brendan Behan, Duckworth, £4.95

"I never turned to drink. It seemed to turn to me… To hell with poverty – we'll kill a chicken… The drink in that pub isn't fit for washing hearses… I was related to an Alsatian by marriage."

The Artificial Kid, Bruce Sterling, Hardwired, £8.99

This book is a nerd's paradise of poncho-wearers from another dimension. The fate of an entire imaginary planet lies in the hands of the Artificial Kid who knows every inch of his body. Especially his penis, one imagines. Random quote: "All three of us looked at Moses." Wise men.



Double Your Salary, Bonk Your Boss, Go Home Early, Guy Browning, Virgin, £7.99

Its a simpleton's Christmas book-reading bonanza. Random quote: "If your job doesn't have stress, it's obviously not worth doing or it's some sort of medieval peasant type-job like eel watching…" Or DJing, maybe.

Gary Numan: Praying To The Aliens, Gary Numan with Steve Malins, Andre Deutsch, £12.99

A true techno pioneer, his music was a cross between Kraftwerk and the Grumble Weeds. This balding millionaire maverick crashed planes like an idiot and felt safest of all in his car. Random quote: "The Yak gave me my fair share of heart-stopping moments." Help the aged, buy this book.

The Strange Adventures Of The Dangerous Sports Club, Martin Lyster, The Do Not Press, £8

The gratuitous tales of adrenalin-junk, gang amateur adventurer toffs bargepoleing their arses around the globe. They also have the ability to dress up, dangle, slide and hurt themselves – all for the sake of adrenal action, sweat and cash. Random quote: "David and Hugo were the passengers." Poshed-up bungee bandits.

Fabulous Beasts, Malcolm Ashman, Paper Tiger, £13.99

Just why credulous rock fans need compendiums of mythical beasts is worrying. Who needs to look at a bearded cyclops with a tiddly weener or check the detail of a winged-breasted weasel with chicken-eyes. The best is Echidne; an armless bitch with a pimply serpent's arse who displayed her breasts outside her cave to lure men inside. Then she ate them raw. What kind of madness is this? Random quote: "Christian symbolism turned her into a notorious prostitute." God's fault.

Coping With A Trekkie, Samuel Ramer, Headline, £7.99

If it's the future, why can't Kirk get a better hairpiece? Why do all aliens have weird foreheads? Is Spock an astral transexual? Random quote: "They tampered with his genetic code and made him smart." Spock's cock.

Scattered Remains: A Celebration of 750 Years Of Bedlam, Paul Pinn, Tanjen, £6.99

This is a collection of short stories examining the creative influence and happy-hardcore style side-effects of mental illness. Random quote: "A man's face filled the frame – flat-nosed, slit-eyed, scarred, mean and olive; distinctly foreign, alien even. I told her to fuck off." See above.

Boom Boom Boom: The Rhythm Of English Basketball, Ian Whittell, Yorkshire Arts Circus, £12

Broken down into easy-to-read paragraphs, here's everything you need to know about the English basketball scene. Vest, shorts, managers, coaches, love, balls, hoops, etc. Random quote: " I went up for a two-hander." Slam-dunking-anoraks.

Cooking With Ganja, Eric, PO Box 2223, Dorchester, Dorset, £10.95

Eric says: "*Cooking with Ganja* is an original English cookbook… clearly written, no beating around the bush." He's not wrong. Cakes, drinks, savouries and flans, everything a stoner needs to avoid using their lungs. The lazy bastards. Random quote: "Pour on bananas."

ROWAN CHERNIN

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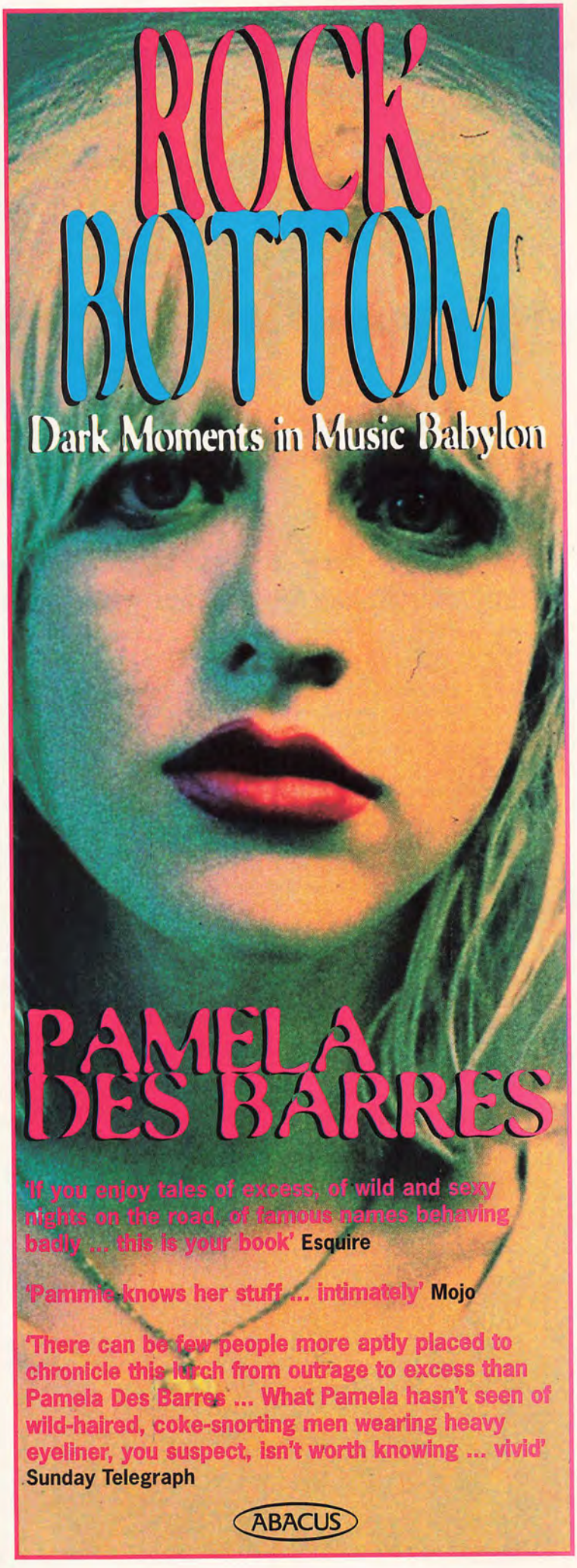
ROCK BOTTOM
Dark Moments in Music Babylon
PAMELA DES BARRES
'If you enjoy tales of excess, of wild and sexy nights on the road, of famous names behaving badly ... this is your book' Esquire
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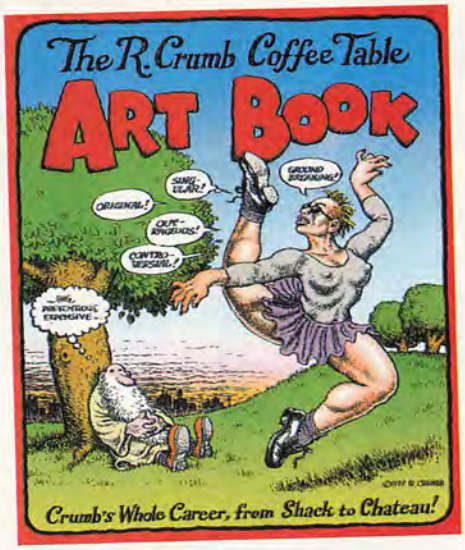
'There can be few people more aptly placed to chronicle this lurch from outrage to excess than Pamela Des Barres ... What Pamela hasn't seen of wild-haired, coke-snorting men wearing heavy eyeliner, you suspect, isn't worth knowing ... vivid' Sunday Telegraph
ABACUS



ALL ASSHOLE comics
YER ALL ASSHOLES!
by OFAY-ASSHOLE-CARTOONIST R. CRUMB, CHICAGOLAND, SUMMER '68
ROW ROW ROW Y'BOAT GENTLY DOWN TH' STREAM!

Oh Crumbs

Cartoonist Robert Crumb draws more than curtains

Robert Crumb is an original graphic rebel. One of the principal founders of the '60s US underground 'comix' scene, he was part of a movement which defiantly screwed up the US Comics Code Authority's restrictive manifesto for decency. Crumb's drawings for such early titles as *Zap*, *Snatch*, *Despair*, *Uneeda*, and *Big Ass* mercilessly satirised American society, together with its perverse behaviour and sexual hang-ups. Imagine the horror that greeted cartoons like 'The Family That LAYS Together STAYS Together!' Or stories about the character Joe Blow teaching his daughter how to give blow jobs, while his suspender-clad wife seduces her son.

His early efforts weren't so extreme. Crumb started creating comics in the early '50s with his brother Charles, an occupation that demanded much study and hard labour. The two brothers used to read their well-thumbed copies of Walt Disney's *Comics And Stories*, Walt Kelly's *Pogo Possum* and *Little Lulu* repeatedly, and then attempt to create their own versions of their favourite "funny animal" comics. One of these early attempts was Charles Crumb's 'Fuzzy The Bunny', a story which Robert would later redraw and publish in *Zap 5* some 18 years later. Another was 'Brombo The Panda', which Crumb describes as a childhood chore.

"I drew years and years of 'Brombo The Panda' comics that were really uninspired, but I had to turn them out on a monthly schedule. Without my brother Charles forcing me to draw comics, I would now be a commercial illustrator signing my work 'Bob Dennis'."

The nearest Robert Crumb ever got to being Bob Dennis was when he moved to Cleveland in 1962 and secured an artist's job at American Greetings, designing cards. It was during this period that Crumb was instructed to "draw cute".

These two periods of the artist's early creative life would prove to be the foundation for many of his finest and most memorable creations. Amongst these are hippy guru philosopher Mr Natural and his socially repressed disciple Flakey Foont, Fritz The Cat (a character Hollywood turned into the star of an adult animation feature, forcing his unimpressed creator to kill him off at a later date), Mr Snoid the demonic dwarf, Angelfood McSpade (an outlandish spoof on white America's attitude to black females) and the sexually dangerous Devil Girl, representing Crumb's psycho-sexual fantasies rolled into one wild woman.

"My personal obsession for big women interferes with some people's enjoyment of my work," he sighs. "I knew it was weird and disturbing, and even offensive to a lot of people. But I couldn't keep it out of the comics. I had to do it. It was addictive! I was hooked!" Crumb's idea of what he considered "the perfect female body" had to be equipped with, "Full lips, big teeth, firm breasts, strong arms, large thighs, large muscular legs, thick ankles, large, wide, strong feet and (most important of all) exceptionally large, well-endowed buttocks with 'shelf' effect." His orgiastic sex romp strips (featuring himself as the puny, yet horny, sole male character) caused feminist movements, the politically correct-minded masses and the UK customs to howl in protest, much to his astonishment and dismay.

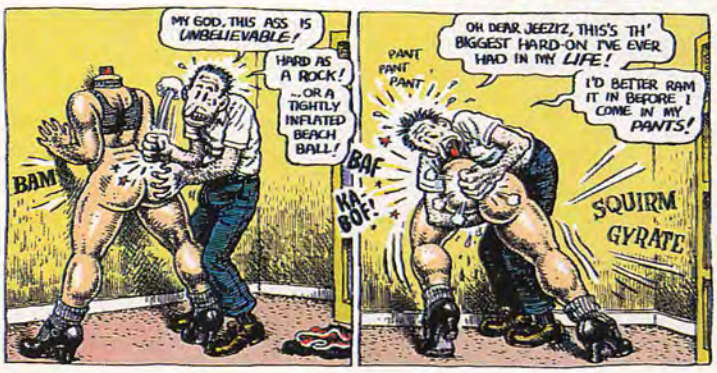
Along with big-buttocked women and drawing, Crumb's other obsession is music. In the psychedelic '60s, his warped, nostalgic, street-smart style attracted rock icon Janis Joplin, who commissioned him to supply the artwork for her *Cheap Thrills* album. Crumb's front cover portrait of a naked Janis was rejected by her record company and the (now famous) back cover he designed was used instead. Although he didn't particularly care for the psychedelic music of the time (he prefers old country blues tunes), designing record covers provided yet another outlet for his artistic urges. Soon he was designing sleeves for blues label compilations and making records with a band called The Cheap Suit Serenaders. Today, Crumb lives in rural France with his artist wife Aline and their daughter, still cranks out great comics that bite, and is every bit as cranky as he was in the '60s.

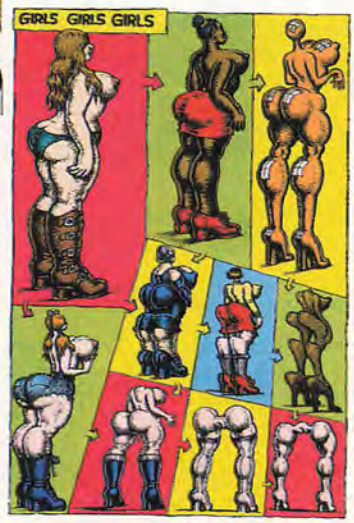
"Being pestered by fucking journalists is a nightmare. I've developed such loathing for journalists and media people. I guess I'm just ungrateful, huh?"

EDWIN POUNCEY

All quotes and images taken from the massive R Crumb Coffee Table Art Book, *Bloomsbury, £25.*

His orgiastic sex romp strips caused UK Customs to howl in protest


MY GOD, THIS ASS IS UNBELIEVABLE!
HARD AS A ROCK!
...OR A TIGHTLY INFLATED BEACH BALL!
BAM
OH DEAR JEEZIZ, THIS'S TH' BIGGEST HARD-ON I'VE EVER HAD IN MY LIFE!
PANT PANT PANT
I'D BETTER RAM IT IN BEFORE I COME IN MY PANTS!
BAF
KA-BOF!
SQUIRM
GYRATE



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Laugh-in gear

Get up to speed on comedy with some drive-time gags

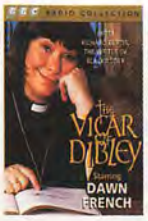
I was off to Manchester to see the folks – a generally tedious journey which usually tosses up the same surprises of the M1, M6, and Newport Pagnell service station every time. This time would be different. A very dull survey arrived in the office proclaiming that 63 per cent of drivers who laugh in their car become less aggressive on the road. With these sort of facts at my fingertips and a chance to claim all my petrol expenses for the journey, I filled the car with some comedy tapes, bought a couple of packs of Wotsits and set off for the North.

The Mark Radcliffe Show (BBC)
The evening shows were good for the choice of music more than anything else. This tape, unfortunately, has no music on it. Just Radcliffe and Lard's weak attempts at *Fast Show*-type sketches, but with characters doing Manc accents. And even though I'm from there myself, it doesn't stop their accents annoying me so much that my rage level actually increased by 25 per cent. Tossy bogshit.
How long did it last? For three long miles up the M1.
Best gag: Someone saying 'bollocks'.

Jack Dee – Live In London (Funny Business)
Dee has a tone of voice that doesn't help the long-distance driver. Monotone ain't gonna budge my mind. But he's a witty bloke. This tape is probably better than going to see him live, to be honest. Within 10 minutes, his subjects included builders, Bournemouth, the audience, Sodastreams, Mystic Meg and women. Solid, reliable entertainment.
How long did it last? About 27 miles.
Best gag: "Why do builders have see-through tupperware lunch boxes? So they know if they're going to work or coming home."

Round The Horne 9 (BBC)
Big radio show of the '60s and popular with the old folk. A sort of safe comedy sketch show named after some bloke called Kenneth Horne who I've never heard of. Kenneth Williams is the one that makes it, though. Anything he does is funny. Even if it's just "Ohhhh noooo, don't be like that!" Classic old English humour.
How long did it last? 17 miles.
Best gag: "The answers to last week's quiz was a Himalayan goat and the puzzle picture was a bird's-eye view of an orang-utan's tonsil."

Roy Chubby Brown – The Early Years (Funny Business)
A fat, loud-mouth, North-eastern bigot. His very first line is "Dick Turpin is officially dead! Last coach he held up was full of Leeds supporters." He's soon ranting about a Chinese man who lives near him and then does a Pearl Harbour gag. He can't even be an accurate racist. Berk.
How long did it last? Two miles.
Best gag: "We're only put on this earth, lads, because a vibrator can't buy a round of fucking drinks."



The Vicar Of Dibley (BBC)
This is that Dawn French thing. Never watched it on telly – I was more *Father Ted* myself. The story sounds a bit stale and requires itself to be more visual for it to work. Appealing to the *One Foot In The Grave* crowd, really. Weak, like a weak tea with too much water in it.
How long did it last? Six miles.
Best gag: "I've seen better flower arranging at a compost heap."

Harry Enfield And Chums (BBC)
This is the über-comedy tape of comedy tapes. The outright winner, if not only for the Self-Righteous Brothers on Edmonds. Next up, there's Tim Nice But Dim, Kevin the teenager and Jürgen the German. This also reaffirms that Paul Whitehouse is a genius of his time. Marvellous.
How long did it last? 87 miles.
Best gag: "In the world of light entertainment, there's only three pretenders to the crown... Barrymore, Forsyth and, of course, Edmonds."

More Sporting Gaffes (BBC)
John Inverdale is obviously the BBC's big hope for sports presenting; this is really boring. One for the uncle with the dodgy lung. It's supposed to be some of the funniest mistakes from the BBC's sports department but there's not enough "The bowler's Holding the batsman's Willy" and too much people coughing in a microphone.
How long did it last? 10 miles.
Best gag: Nigel Mansell saying, "Oh yes, I've been on a 17-hand whore... erm, I mean, horse."

Jethro – The Beast Of Bodmin Moor (Funny Business)
A bearded buffoon who appears on *The Des O'Connor Show*. His style is West Country humour with a lot of namechecks to Exeter and Barnstaple. Arse.
How long did it last? Three quarters of a mile.
Best gag: "Anyone here from Bournemouth?" "Yes, well piss off home, then."
THE LOAFER

COMPETITION

By putting pen to paper, 20 lucky computerised football fanatics will win a copy of Electronic Arts' latest hit for the Playstation; FIFA: Road To World Cup 98. There's everything here; pitches, players, balls, terraces, football hooligans, duffing up the French. Er, no, forget those last two. This state-of-the-art game of two halves has all the initial 172 teams, 16 international stadiums and commentary by Lynam, Gray and Motson. It's a virtual set-up for everyone who loves 'the game' but can't be arsed to get down the local park for a kick-about. Just answer this question: Why has France got the Championships and we haven't? Mark a postcard with 'FIFA 98' competition and send it off to **loaded**, King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London, SE1 9LS. Any discretion and fairness on the part of the judges will be ignored.

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Cult kids' TV, puppets and comics on the net, for those in a state of arrested development

Hello, good evening and thank you. Tonight the stars are shining up above, the trees are twinkling in their glens and the mice are steaming their puddings under an old oak fire. Yes, once again it is Christmas. That time of year when we remember the fictional son of so-called God. A Jewish man called Jesus, he is also fondly remembered in the *Koran*, where tales of his mostly fictional exploits are also enscribed. To celebrate these facts, we take an in-depth look at other great fictional characters – comics and animated heroes.
To e-mail us about anything, try **adam_porter@ipc.co.uk** and pray.

If you think that *Ren & Stimpy* has been shit recently, you could be right. John Kricfalusi, the creator of R&S was deemed too difficult and dangerous for American TV's sensibilities and was removed after the second series. He now has to watch painfully from the sidelines as corporate immitators of his illustrative style produce a watered-down version of his cartoon. "There is a conspiracy to protect humans from humanity," he rages. Fear not – you can check out his new animated series featuring Idiot Boy and George Liquor freely available on the net at **http://www.spumco.com.** Fry that bacon.

If you need to reach into the heart of Bod, discover the truth about His glory or seek His love, you shalt find these pages:
http://www.geocities.com/TelevisionCity/8662/bod.html – Bod page
http://www.users.zetnet.co.uk/petef/scribbles/bod.html – Bod sexuality
http://www.geocities.com/TelevisionCity/1011/ – Children's TV shows

These are big indexes for loads of different comics, from alternative crazy shit to more conventional shit.
http://www.nerdworld.com/cgi-bin/page.cgi?cat=164 – Nerdworld
http://www.cartoonexpress.com/index.shtml – Cartoon Express

Talking of alternative stuff, have a look at this small selection of nutcase-inspired nonsense.
http://www.compusmart.ab.ca/snotley/bob.htm – Bob The Angry Flower
http://www.dspinner.demon.co.uk/fatcat.htm – *Fat Freddy's Cat*
http://www.teleport.com/~bushman/cat.html – *Fat Freddy's Cat* 2
http://www.lastgasp.com/crumb1.html – Robert Crumb
http://www.essentialmedia.com/Robert_Crumb.html – More Crumb

That Belgian geezer with the hair, the sailor and the dog. Mmm... I saw a film like that recently.
http://www.tintin.qc.ca/ – Tintin

Marvel and DC are probably the two best-known comic companies in the world, but they're keen not to lose all their drawings over the net, so the quality of graphics can be disappointing.
http://www.fanatech.com/CGI_ROOT/hazel.cgi?action=serve&item=swlinks.html – *Star Wars* links
http://205.180.58.11/Hollywood/2855 – Women of Marvel
http://www.a-two-z.com/marval.html – Draw your own
http://www.dccomics.com/ – DC

For all those Judge Dreddies, you can lay down the law, be the law and once a week mow the lawn.
http://www.soton.ac.uk/~counihan/j/art/ – comic art/*2000AD*
http://vw.tci.uni-hannover.de/zaepfchen/jd/judge.htm – Dredd

If regression's the name of the game, then just spin into the savage vortex that is the deep, dark world of *Mr Benn*, the savage post-industrial society of *Trumpton*, *Chigley* and *Camberwick Green* or the collective conformity and compliance of the place that they called "Herbidacious". Then, there's always a small visit to the weird alien world inhabited by the snoutied singing *Clangers* or the juvenile fantasy puppet madness of Sooty & Sweep.
http://www.vacuform.com/gatchaman – *Battle Of The Planets*
http://www.doc-h.demon.co.uk/benn.htm – *Mr Benn*
http://www.bbc.co.uk/evans – Trumpton
http://www.misenus.demon.co.uk/herbs.htm – *The Herbs*
http://www.know.demon.co.uk/clangers – *The Clangers*
http://www.angelfire.com/wa/robbo/index.html – Sooty & Sweep

So what's best at Christmas, being Bod or God?

What's the best?	GOD	BOD
Does he exist?	No **0/10**	On paper and in our hearts **10/10**
Does he wear an orange dress?	He doesn't exist **0/10**	The dress of Bod **10/10**
Did he create the Earth?	Don't be stupid **0/10**	Could have done if asked nicely **2/10**
Does he have an auntie Flo?	No mention in *The Bible* **0/10**	Amazingly, yes! **10/10**
Did his son never marry and hang around men?	Sssh! Well... yes **10/10**	Bod may be gay, or just not want kids **0/10**
Final score	10/50	32/50

So, simply put, believe in the love of Bod. Live in the love and you will live in Bod. Bod can save us, take us into the next millennium baldly and wearing a dress. Now that is a role model.

Game of the month

"I'm not going in there, I got jolly rogered last time" (*The Curse Of Monkey Island*)

Monkey puzzle three

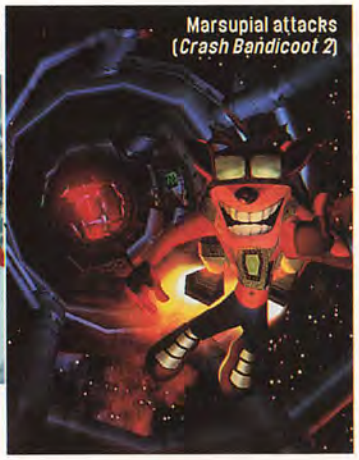
Another generous helping of pirates, treasure and derring-do

The Curse Of Monkey Island, PC-CD ROM, £39.99
Your name is Guybrush Threepwood. Your sworn enemy is a dead pirate called LeChuck, who has kidnapped your true love, Elaine Marley. You live in a world populated by vegetarian cannibals and people with names like Snugglecakes. Sounds familiar? Yes, this is the long-awaited sequel to the first two Monkey Island adventure games, the best and funniest graphic adventure thingies ever. All the essential elements are still here, incorporated into a shiny new graphical interface. Buy it. **Verdict 9.6/10**
MIKE KARIN

Clayfighter, Nintendo 64, £59.99
Lots of Plasticine-type dudes (bastard descendants of Morph) are arranged into interesting arenas to beat, stretch, slap and tickle each other into submission. This beat-'em-up has bags of originality and that childish tint that goes down so well with adults. Take control of a Blob, a clown, a voodoo priest or a snowman and you might understand the warped thinking behind this.
Verdict: 8.6/10

"Take that, Santa, you fat bastard!" (*Clayfighter*)

Crash Bandicoot 2, Playstation, £39.99
The Aussie critter returns with new levels, moves, a polar bear buddy and the coolest graphics around. Once again, Crash is in the shit, Dr Cortex is shovelling it and you'll be up to your neck in it when the game forces you into a compulsive disorder to keep playing.
Verdict: 8.5/10



Marsupial attacks (*Crash Bandicoot 2*)

Test Drive 4, Playstation, £39.99
Test Drive as a title has little to do with this high speed, multi-vehicular chase through downtown San Francisco, Tokyo or a few other cityscapes. Loads of tracks, cars and realistic handling against a lack of two-player mode and decent smashes make this a not-bad contender for your collection.
Verdict: 6.9/10
PIERS TOWNLEY

Grand Theft Auto, PC-CD ROM, £49.99
This is great. Basically it's a racing game, but with the added appeal of playing a young mercenary who works for the local mob. Your average day is spent performing conventional villainous duties (drive-by shootings, car theft, drug smuggling etc) and there's plenty of opportunity to get involved with more exotic stuff like kidnapping, hijacking and, somewhat bizarrely, setting fire to monks. Twenty different types of car are available to nick in three detailed cities. Your enemies include a psychotic police force, the local Hell's Angels chapter and rival street gangs. Heart-warming stuff.
Verdict 9.13/10

Remember, kids: car theft is crime (*Grand Theft Auto*)

Jedi Knight – Dark Forces II, PC-CD ROM, £29.99
Star Wars meets *Doom* in a fantastic 21 level, 3D multiplayer, intergalactic dust-up. As well as the usual array of conventional weapons, the light-sabre makes its first appearance in a video game, and there are the 'deeply mystical' powers of the Force which allow you to do stuff like see through walls, heal your Jedi mates and retrieve objects from far away.
Verdict 8.41/10

Riven, PC-CD ROM, £44.99
Gigantic, monumental sequel to *Myst*. Like its predecessor, there's lots of puzzles to be solved, a great big world to be explored and more beautiful scenery than you can shake a stick at. Unlike *Myst*, the gameplay amounts to more than just a virtual tour of pleasant locations, with 5 CDs' worth of brain-bending über-intricacies. Nerdy but nice.
Verdict 8.83/10
MIKE KARIN

COMPETITION

A bit of the old Judge D in yer blood? This month, we give you the chance to win a special Dredd-branded Playstation complete with a Lawgiver light-gun and the stunning new *Judge Dredd* game, so you can worry your mates and loved ones by stalking the house bellowing, "I am the law!" and behaving like a tit. Q: How many original Judges were there? a) 1,398; b) 1; c) An infinite number; d) None, it's a cartoon strip, it's not real. Answers to the usual address.

"My joystick's bigger than yours"

Nerds landing

Crash a 747 on a proper flight simulator

If you've always wanted to fly a plane but don't know your flaps from your pitch, then you can, for not a lot of money, have a go on a range of airline simulators organised by The Activity Superstore.

These souped-up arcade machines are designed to fly like the real thing – in this case, a hydraulic metal box linked to expensive computers pretending to be a passenger plane weighing thousands of tonnes and flying at over 500mph.

"Does it do loops?" I ask

Dr Who was scrapped before this made an appearance

Steve, my co-pilot in the £15million MD 83 passenger airliner simulator.

"Let's just concentrate on landing it, shall we?" he sneers.

Usually these things get played with by real pilots hoping not to lose their flying licences by being crap at the job. "Pilots don't really like these things," explains Steve. "They're accurate to every detail, so it's the aerial equivalent of a driving lesson for them."

I'm just here for the crack, so I guess the pressure is off. I've listened to and forgotten the safety briefing because, once inside, it's a different matter. The cramped metallic coffin of a flight deck is bristling with dials, levers, lights and switches. The computer-generated lights of Runway 26 at Gatwick glimmer in the twilight and it all becomes frighteningly real; you can even see car tail-lights. So, is it easy to cock up in one of these? "Surprisingly so," reveals Steve. "Only recently, someone made the simulator ditch more than I've ever seen. Smashed the wing down first at 230mph." Not an Aeroflot pilot by any chance?" "No, but he did shit himself."

With engine noise, side-winds and the very best hydraulics, taking off scares you stupid. Just keeping the stick level on a runway approach will have you sweating like a speed-addled Swede in a sauna.

Ahead, the scenery shifts, pretend planes fly worryingly close and warning lights flash all over the shop. "You're doing fine," Steve reassures me, "just relax."

Easy for you to say, Mister.

One of the worst situations, and an easy one to get into, Steve informs me, is a stall. Small aircraft – not too bad. Big fucking aircraft – disaster looms. The only way to counteract it is to dip the nose and increase the speed. Maybe pray a little. But when you're only 900ft from Athens' main runway, this proves a bit gut-wrenching, simulator or otherwise. We level out with barely 100ft spare, but the cross-wind forces the plane to slide sideways over the airport boundary and the 'terrain' warning siren is deafening. The display lights up like the proverbial Christmas tree. Basically, it's the end of the road for 179 holiday makers. They should have stuck to Scarborough.

PIERS TOWNLEY

To crash a pretend airliner, contact The Activity Superstore on 01799 526526.

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cyber news from our Internet nerds

At last. Our own world. A virtual environment where you can come and chat, exchange interesting information, start up obscure cults and generally corrupt each other. We can do all this because **loaded**world has come into existence. It's a bit scary, there are no rules and you can come dressed as anything you like. Mostly women, I should guess. Like the last planet at the end of the collapsing universe, this is the world to end all worlds. **loaded**world is born and is sitting there spinning at 1,000mph at **http://www.uploaded.com/site/palace**

COMPETITION

Free games, free booze and our stimulating company for the entire evening. What more could you ask for? On 22 January we'll all be down at Segaworld in the Trocadero, London, for a nerdtastic evening of freebie fun and games, courtesy of those lovely Sega people. The event will run from 9pm to midnight, and there's 50 pairs of tickets to be had. Just send your answer to the following question to the 'I want a free night out at Segaworld competition', **loaded**, King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS. You must be able to arrange your own transport, and please only enter if you're certain you'll be able to attend. What is the name of Sega's hedgehog? a) Derek; b) Dave; c) Sonic.

The operation to catch falling stockbrokers was well underway

next month in

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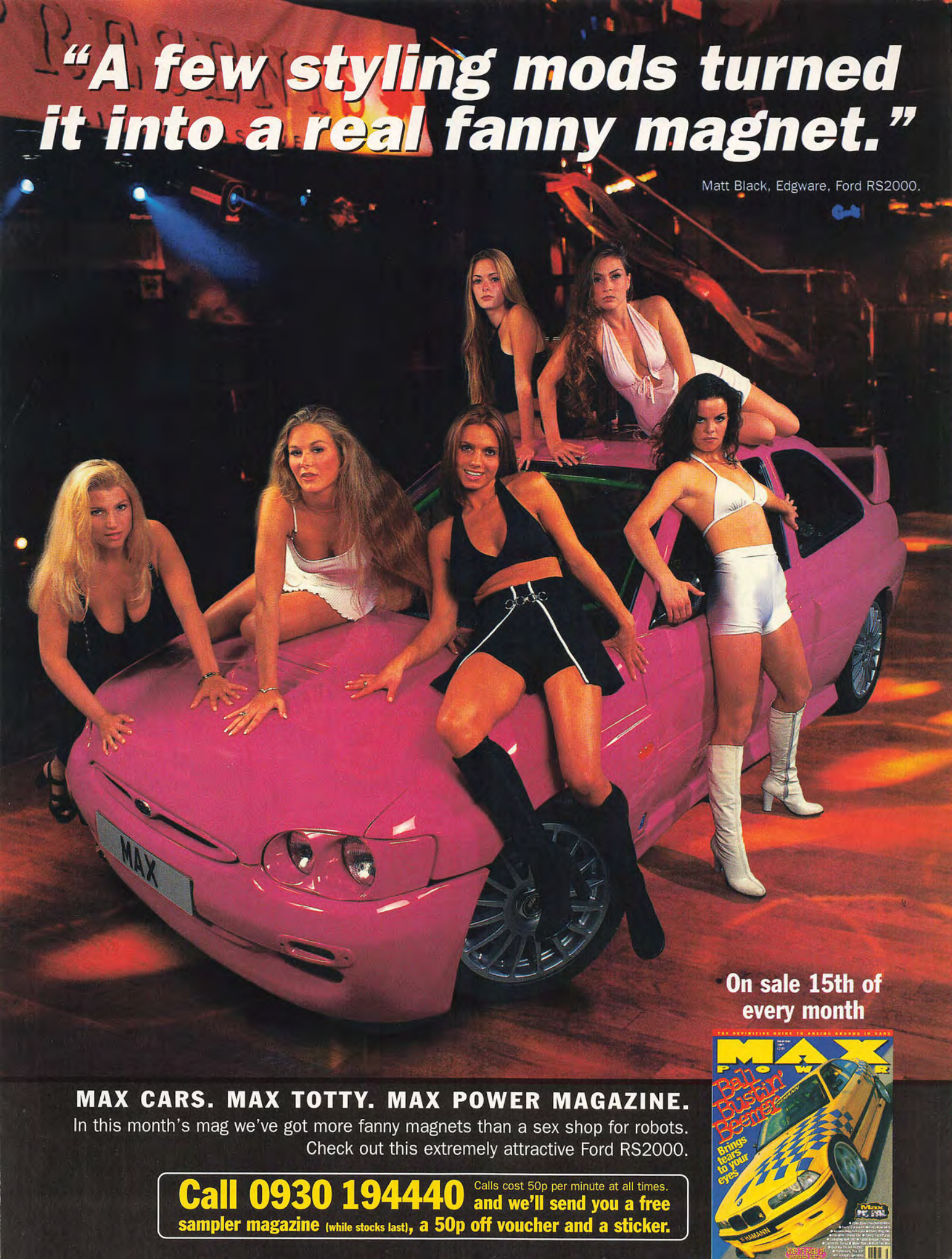
Matt Black, Edgware, Ford RS2000.



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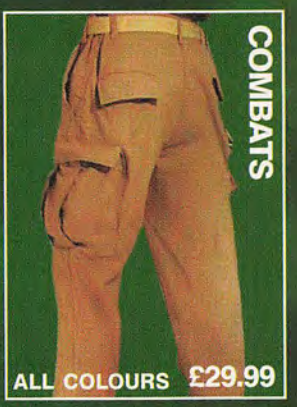

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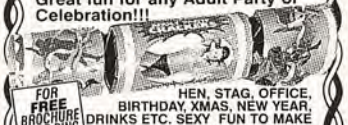
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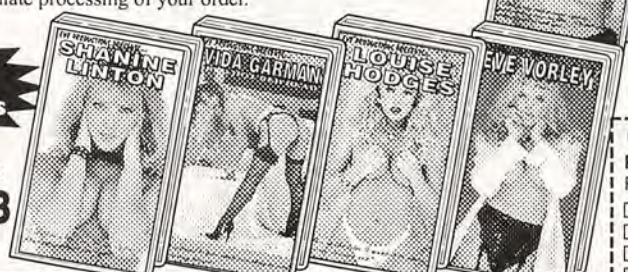

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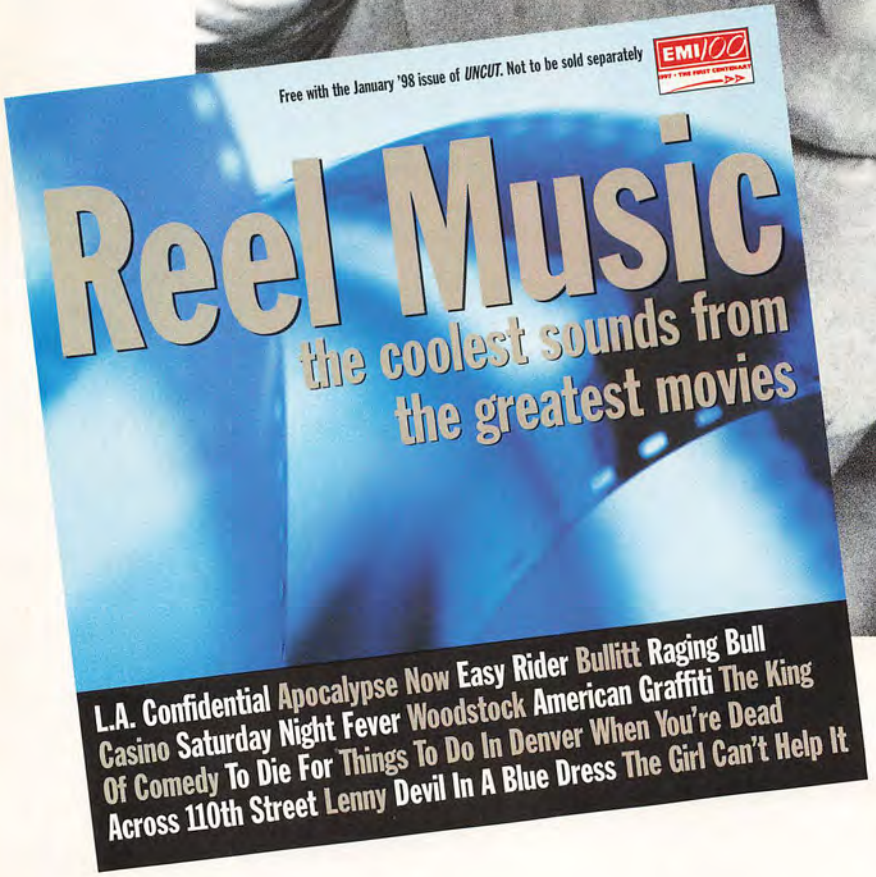
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problems sorted

Dr Mick

As the winter months draw in, I find that loads of people are drifting into my clinic moping on about how miserable they are because they're not getting enough light or something. Suits me. I'm used to operating with the lights off. I've got it down to a fine art. People say I'm like a bloody rabbit. I can do a heart and lung transplant just by feeling my way around. Like to see a rabbit do that. Fat chance. A monkey, yes. They're more dexterous, aren't they? They could hold a torch in one hand.

Seen it done. Bloody hilarious. Video'd it for Beadle. He's had some great stuff off me over the years. Giraffe parachuting off a church roof. That was my favourite. Showed it at Corbett's 50th wedding anniversary. Forsyth loved it. Kept playing it over and over till Michael Parkinson took umbrage and lamped him one in the stomach. Great night out.

Anyway, winter darkness – that's the problem, isn't it? Seasonally Affected Disorder or SAD syndrome as those bloody work experience kids in my clinic keep calling it. It's always a bad idea giving an illness a proper name like that, I reckon. Makes it too easy for a punter to just look it up in a medical book. Challenges the whole concept of trust between a doctor and his punter, doesn't it?

Obviously, now this thing's got a proper scientific-sounding name, I can't immediately recommend amputation of a leg or an expensive course of cosmetic surgery, can I? No, they've got me over a barrel. Generally, I just give 'em a big packet of light bulbs and tell 'em to stay indoors till it's August. One sniff of Christmas and I'm off on the yacht, anyway. Even Tarby in Panto won't drag me out of the Caribbean. My other trick is to just get on a plane and keep heading west until February. I won't bother to land at all. Practical solutions, you see. Got the idea from watching a programme about geese.

Here's how I see it. A human being, like a big plant that can walk about and wear clothes, needs light and heat from the sun to draw vital energy. Nothing wrong with that. Of course, a plant also needs a big pot to live in. I live in a flat. In that sense, we differ. Still, you don't hear plants going on about the terrible weather and suchlike, do you? No, they just grin and bear it.

They realise it's just nature's way of saying, that's your lot till the start of the next tax year. For me though, the misery of winter darkness is not

Some darkness, yesterday

a one-way ticket. It's a barrel-load of business opportunities...

1 First up. In the dark, no one can recognise you. An invaluable aid to effective business practice. I find my financial input is almost halved in broad daylight. If they can see your face, they can pick you out in a police line-up. That's a simple rule I learned early on. Bad lighting is a businessman's best friend. Why do you think that Stringfellow fella is never out of his nightclub. He's no bloody fool. Right, here's a graph. See Fig 1...

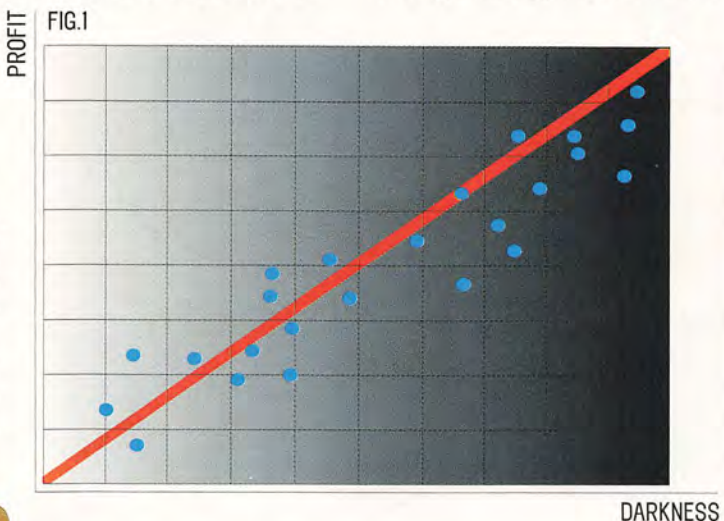
2 More children and old people get colds. Good news for all-night chemists.

3 There's fewer Frenchmen on the streets of Kensington. Got to be a plus, hasn't it?

4 All the dangerous animals are asleep. Bears, sheep etc... You can move them about all over the place and they won't care what's going on. Drag a couple of bears onto a flatbed truck, then dump them in a wardrobe in a mate's house. Don't tell him. Just sit back and wait till they come out of hibernation. There'll be total chaos round the end of February. Worth getting it on video, according to Beadle.

5 The shops stay open longer and they can't see what change you're giving them. Cheers.

FIG.1



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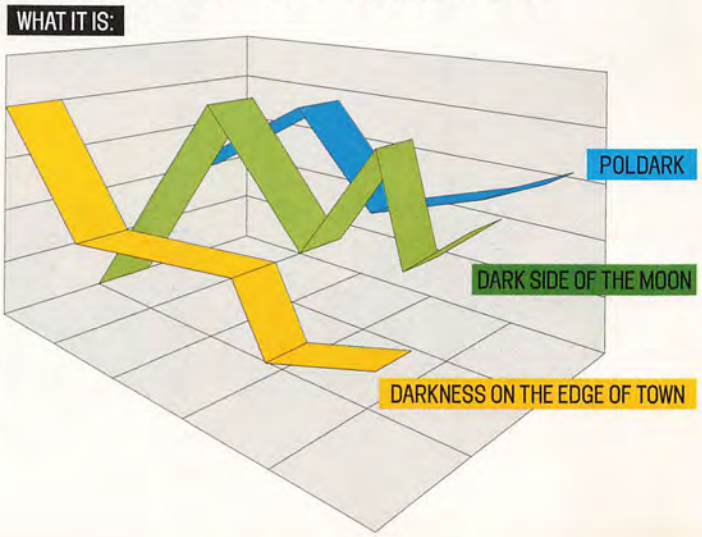

see previous page for office pest

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